SOME

MOTIVES AND INCENTIVES

To the Love of

GOD,

Pathetically Discours'd of in a Letter to a Friend.

BY

The Honble ROBERT BOYLE.

The Fourth Edition much Corrected.

Let us consider one another, to provoke unto Love.
Heb. 10. 24.

LONDON,
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To the Love of

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By the Honourable ROBERT BOYLE, Esq.

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TO
THE COUNTESS
OF
WARWICK.

My Dear Sister,

I Expect You should somewhat wonder, that after having for above Eleven years been careful to keep this following Letter from the Publick View, and that too notwithstanding the Sollicitation (not to say Importunity) of divers Illustrious Persons, and even Your Commands, to Release it from its Confinement; I should now at length give way to its Passing Abroad into the

World, and its making You a Publick and Solemn Address. Wherefore judging my self oblig'd to give You an Account of a Paper, for which You have been long pleas'd so Highly and so Obligingly to concern Your self, I must, to remove Your Wonder, inform You, That I am Reduc'd to this Publication in my own Defence. For, whilst I was far from Dreaming of permitting this Epistle to pass out of my Closet, it happen'd, that a broken Copy of it did (by I know not what Misfortune for me) fall into the hands of a Necessitous person, who would needs persuade himself, that, by Printing it, he might relieve some of his present Wants; and thereupon proffer'd to sell the Copy for a sum of Mony. But my good Fortune leading him to a Stationer, to whom my name was not unknown, he, very civilly, sent me forthwith notice of the Pro-

position

position that was made him, and after came himself to acquaint me, that the Copy, about which he had been treated with, being but One of Two or Three that were then abroad, some or other of them would, questionless, soon find the way to the Press. This unwelcome Accident did little less Trouble than Surprize me; for, Besides that it impos'd on me the Necessity of a Publication I had so long Declin'd; and Besides that I knew, that Compositures of a very differing Nature being expected from me, the appearing of This, instead of Them, would make this Unwelcom to many, though it had fewer Imperfections than it has: Besides these things, (I say) my Sight was then, and is still, so impair'd by a distemper in my Eyes; and the Hours I could dispose of were so præ-ingag'd to Philoso-

Some Treatises relating to Experimental Philosophy.

phical Themes, that I could not promise my self so much as to Read it over before its going to the Printer. But considering after all this, that the Copy I had by me was like to prove more Full, and less Faulty, than any of those that some endeavour'd to obtrude upon the World, I thought it less Inconvenient to venture mine own abroad, than to run the hazard of a Surreptitious Edition of a Discourse, that could so ill bear the appearing with any other Blemishes than those it brought with it into the World from my Pen. And therefore, having put it into the hands of Persons, whose eminent Abilities, the more Knowing part of the Nation has long and justly admir'd, and begg'd their Impartial Opinion and Castigations of it, (giving them entire Liberty to Alter or Expunge whatever they dislik'd;) and finding

finding (by hastily turning over the Leaves) that their Castigations were onely enough to let me see, that they had heedfully read it over; and were accompanied with Encouragements, which care was taken to keep me from looking upon as meer Complements: I let it go to the Press, without so much as having once Perus'd it, or heard it read over, since the Stationer first gave me the Advertisement I told you of. Which I made the less scruple to do, because a Critick, whose Judgment and Piety I much reverence, seriously endeavoured to persuade me, that I ought not in Conscience to decline publishing, what he was pleased to think proper to Kindle or Cherish the Flames of Divine Love in the Breasts of the Readers. And my Haste it self did afterwards Promise me these Advantages, That notwithstanding my

Books not coming forth sooner, I should not lose the Excuse of Youth *I had when it was Written: nay, and That the Faulty passages which may be met with in it, will perhaps be charged upon those that suffer'd them to pass Uncorrected, when they had so absolute a Power to Expunge or Reform them. These, and the like Motives, having induc'd me to consent to the Publication of the following Letter, I needed not deliberate long, To whom I should address it. For, since that Accomplish'd* Lindamor, *whom it so much Concern'd, has left the World, there is no Person in it to whom this Address is any thing near so due, as unto You, dear Sister. It was at that Delicious* Leeze, *where You are now the Mistress, that this Letter was written; and it was of You that I borrow'd those hours I spent in writing it.*

'Twas

'Twas to You that I shew'd it almost Sheet by Sheet, before I resolv'd to send it away. 'Tis You that can best Excuse the Imperfections of it, as knowing not only the more Obvious, but the more Private Avocations and other Disadvantages, among which it was penn'd. 'Tis You that have ever since Sollicited me to divulge it, and have given me the greatest Encouragements to do so, not only by those Sollicitations which imply'd Your Own favourable Opinion of it, but by procuring me (by Concealing or Disguising my name (the unsuspected Opinions of divers competent Judges. In a word, this Address belongs upon so many Scores to You, that I could not make it any where else, without manifestly Wronging You. I know, Dear Sister, that it is Not usual to Dedicate Books to so near a Relation; and that it is usual in Dedicatory Epistles, both to Depreciate what

one

one has Written, and to Extol the Person that one Writes too, especially if it be one of Your Sex and Quality. But You know too, that I never swore Allegiance to Custom, and therefore will not, I suppose, wonder to see me as little Sollicitous to conform to it on This occasion as on Others. In an Age, when so few Persons have Merit enough, to keep that from being Flattery, which should be but Praise, I am not at all Ambitious of casting my self upon the unhappy Necessity, of either Flattering, or appearing Rude; when by better choosing the Objects of my Addresses, I can, as Occasion requires, give Praises without Untruth, or forbear them without Incivility. Nor dare I presume that a Lye ceases to be a Fault, by being put into a Dedicatory Epistle; as Antiently the Hurtful Beasts forgot their Pernicious Nature, when brought into

into the Ark. Not to mention, that Books of Devotion have generally the strange and unhappy Fate, of being Less Welcome to them that Most, than to them that Less, need them. As for the Discourse I present You, though My opinion of it may be ghess'd at, by the Privacy to which I have so long Confin'd it: Yet because, as in Physick, to have a good Opinion of the Medicine, and the Doctor; so in Books of Devotion, (which are a kind of Physick for the Mind) to have one of the Composure, or of the Writer, both inclines us to look after the Prescriptions, and Advantages their Operations; For this reason I shall say nothing to Disparage a Discourse, which is of a Nature to aim more at the being Practised by the Readers, than the being Pardon'd; and shall not at all repine to see it find from the Publick as Favoura-

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ble a Reception, as it has hitherto met with in Closets. And now, Dear Sister, though I know You will not; yet I doubt, my other Readers will expect, that this Letter should, according to the Mode of Epistles Dedicatory, be Concluded with Commendations of You, and Complements to You. It being almost as much out of fashion in such Addresses to Omit giving praises, as 'tis to Believe the praises given on such Occasion. But, though I can Praise You without either Disbelieving my self, or Fearing to be disbelieved by any that knows You; yet, besides that our Relation, and our Friendship, would make such a Way of writing misbecoming me on All occasions; I know Your Piety and Your Modesty, would peculiarly disallow it upon This; where the Subject I am to entertain You with is of such a Nature

ture, as would make a Flaunting Addreſs, but a very Unſuitable Introduction to it. The Nature of my Theme, as well as the Strictneſs of Your Virtue, and Our Friendſhip, forbidding me here to celebrate You, otherwiſe than by letting the World ſee, that I dare, even in a Dedicatory Addreſs, without fear of diſpleaſing You, forbear to Celebrate You. And if it be demanded, Why then I refrain not likewiſe from writing to You a Dedication? I ſhall Anſwer, That I am unwilling to loſe this Opportunity of making a Publick Acknowledgment, that as I have the Honour to be Your Brother, and Your Friend, ſo I have the Juſtice to think it very much my Happineſs to be ſo: Eſpecially, ſince You are pleaſed to aſſure me, That my Relation to You has rather been the Occaſion than the Ground of a Friend-

ſhip,

ſhip, that does, whilſt it enjoyns me to Profeſs my ſelf without Complement, Oblige me to be, with all the Sincerity that's Poſſible,

My Dear Siſter,

Your moſt affectionate Brother, and moſt faithful humble Servant,

ROBERT BOYLE.

Advertiſements to the Reader.

(As they were Written ſome Years ſince, when ſome Intelligent Perſons were to have a ſight of the following Diſcourſe.)

TO *prevent thoſe Scruples which elſe might ariſe in the peruſal of the enſuing Diſcourſe, the Reader of it is requeſted to take notice.*

I. *That though Ignorance hath been of late ſo much in faſhion with too many of our Young Nobility, that ſome paſſages of the enſuing Papers may ſeem unfit to have been written to a Young Gentleman, yet the Perſon they were addreſs'd to, being both a Traveller, a Linguiſt, and a Scholar, it was not improper to diſcourſe with him at the rate of ſuppoſing him ſo qualifi'd.*

II. *That the enſuing Letter was not written Single, being but the Laſt of Divers;* wherein *Love in general was Confeſſed, Juſtifi'd, and Celebrated;* wherein *the Received way of Making Love was Explicated, Defended, and Oppoſed;* wherein *Conſtancy and Inconſtancy in Love were argued For and Againſt;* wherein *Platonick Love was Explicated, Celebrated, and Derided;* wherein

wherein *the Care of Love was Proposed and Prosecuted*; wherein (*to dispatch*) *the Controverted Points concerning Love were discours'd of, in a way suited to the several Themes*; *and to the Humours and Principles of the supposed Writers. But all the Former Papers*, (*written in Complement to a fair Lady*) *though very free from the Guilt of either Licentiousness or Prophaneness, have been by the Author judged too little Serious, either to appear Alone, or to Accompany the ensuing Discourse, wherein he has expressed his Own Opinions, as in the former he but deduced those of Imaginary Persons.*

III. *That the following Paper was to have been Attended by another, wherein the Properties and Duties of* Seraphick Love *were to have been Explicated and insisted on, but the Author, before he had written that Other, accidentally meeting with a French Book, wherein, though what he had already Discoursed of were not handled, he found that much of what he had designed to set down was Anticipated; and the most Pertinent Considerations his intended Themes suggested, were skilfully displaied already: he fear'd it might be injurious to his Reader, and himself, if he should either turn a Transcriber of other's Notions, or decline the best thoughts belonging to his Theme, that the Less Good ones might pass without suspicion for his Own.*

L' Amour Divin de Mr. du Moulin.

IV. That

IV. *That the enſuing Trifle having been written in Haſte, and by Snatches, amongſt diſtracting Avocations, and far from Literary Accommodations, is freely ſubmitted to the Cenſure of Learned and Impartial Peruſers, eſpecially Divines: who are by the Author requeſted to believe its miſtaking Paſſages, and Unwary Expreſſions, (if it contain any ſuch) to have been altogether* Unintentional, *and ſuch as they ſhall never find it to be more than One Labour to make him Diſcern and Retract; he being Reſolved, by God's aſſiſtance, to continue ſtill Obſequious enough to all clearer Diſcoveries of Truth, to be able to ſay,* Errare Poſſum, Hæreticus eſſe Nolo. *And as he is on his part ſo Reſigned, and ſo willing to be Rectifi'd, ſo he expects this Equity from thoſe, to whoſe Judgments he Submits, That, conſidering he intended not to write a Solemn and Regular Treatiſe, but a Private and Familiar Epiſtle, they will paſs by ſuch Unaccurateneſſes as are wont to be Incident to Compoſures of this later Nature. He preſum'd he might ſometimes make Bold with the Vulgar Laws of Tenſes, treating of an Eternity that admits them not. He hop'd, that the Freedom taken in ſome of his Expreſſions concerning Love, and the wonted Objects of it, would be excus'd, by its being exacted by the Deſign he had upon* Lindamor, *though he had not (which yet he has) otherwiſe accounted for it. He intends not to adopt thoſe (too often*

In a Dedication of all the fore-mention'd Letters to my Lady *T. J.*

often erroneous) Traditions of the Vulgar whence he ſometimes draws Compariſons, that he may not deny himſelf the Liberty taken by the Generality of Writers, (without excepting the Learneder ſort of them) who ſcruple not in Popular Compoſures to make Similies and Alluſions grounded on Popular Traditions and Perſuaſions. As for thoſe common Places, which the Method of our Author's Diſcourſe allow'd him not to Decline, he hopes the Reader will Diſcern by his way of Writing, that he loves to uſe them, not as Travellers, but as Hunters uſe the High-ways: For the Traveller, when he once gets into the Road, makes it his buſineſs to Keep in it; whereas the Hunter, if he meets one lying in his way, is not fond of Staying in it, but nimbly Croſſes it, or Traverſes ſo much of it, as is requiſite to be paſt through in the perſute of his Game. And laſtly, if in ſome few Paſſages of the following Letter (eſpecially about the beginning of it) the Expreſſions are leſs Grave and Solemn than the Deſign; the Author hopes, that even They will yet appear tolerably Serious, for the Aerieſt parts of a Letter, written by one Young Gentleman to another.

SOME

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MOTIVES
To the Love of
GOD.

My Dearest Lindamor.

I Am very much delighted to learn, both by the Voice of Fame, and the Information of much more credible Relators, that *Hermione*'s cold Usage has cur'd you of the Fever her scorching eyes had given you: And that when once you found your self reserved to shew, what wonders her Eyes were able to perform, you seasonably resolv'd to become an Instance of the power, rather of Reason, than of Love; and accordingly, did your self the right to frustrate the vain hopes, your Insulting Mistress cherish'd to ma-

niſeſt in you, That her Charms were capable to make your Flame preſevere, when her Change had made it as well cauſleſs as hopeleſs. I could wiſh indeed for your ſake, that you owed your Cure more entirely to your Reaſon, and leſs to your Reſentment; That the Extraction of your Freedom may no ways blemiſh it. But ſince unallay'd Satisfactions are joys too Heavenly, to fall to many mens ſhares on Earth, I cannot but conclude, that your Recovery, even on theſe Tearms, deſerves I ſhould Congratulate it. For, the *French* ſay truly, that *Les plus courtes Folies ſont les meilleures*. And Liberty being too high a Bleſſing to be diveſtible of that nature by Circumſtances; I (that ſeldom deplore him, who by loſing his Miſtreſs recovers Himſelf) think that *Hermione* has but intentionally, not eventually diſoblig'd you; and hath made your flames a better return, by reſtoring you your own Heart, than ſhe could have done by exchanging hers for it. But that which not leaſt endears to me your Recovery, is, That I am aſſur'd by Perſons, from whom I dare Credit even ſo welcome News, that my endeavours prov'd ſo happy as to be conducive to it, and that the

the Conſiderations I ventur'd to preſent you, did at leaſt ſo far contribute to your Freedom, as to give you the Deſire and the Deſign of regaining it. For, I hope, I need not tell you, that I ſeldom uſe Endeavours, whoſe Proſperouſneſs is more welcome to me, than thoſe, that aſpire to ſerve *Lindamor*. And though I cannot ever pay you any Great Services in relation to my vaſtly Greater Deſires, yet I can ſcarce do you Little ones in relation to the Delight reſulting from the having done you any. Nor has the Joy which this ſucceſs of my Diſcourſes brings me, being ſparingly encreas'd by my having ventur'd them with much more Deſire, than Expectation, of their Proſpering; and leſs out of any ſtrong hope they would ſucceed, than out of an unwillingneſs to leave the means, I thought leaſt improbable, unaſſay'd: being invited to excite you to greater hopes, than I durſt allow my ſelf for you; by the Example of Generals, who, whatſoever diſtruſtful thoughts they harbour in their breaſts, ſuppoſe, that (before the Battel) to make their Souldiers fight ſucceſsfully, 'tis as well conducive as requiſite, by encouraging Orations, to make them think they

ſhall do ſo. For, although I endeavour'd indeed to perſuade you, that Reaſon being born Soveraign of the Paſſions, though her Lenity or Supineneſs do ſometimes both occaſion and permit their Uſurpations; She is ſeldom ſo diveſted of her Native Power, but that whenſoever ſhe pleaſeth to imploy what ſhe hath left, ſhe is able to reſume what ſhe hath loſt: And though I was willing you ſhould believe, that to perfect what your Reſentment had begun, was a Task ſo eaſie, that the Victory was as much in your power, as the Reſolution of attempting it; Yet, notwithſtanding all this, I ſay, I was once half perſuaded, that to undertake the Curing of a Lover was the next Weakneſs to the being one. And, *Lindamor*, to deal ingeniouſly with you, your Recovery hath circumſtances in it, that make me very apprehenſive, that you are not yet out of the danger of a Relapſe, and that you have not half ſo abſolutely abandon'd your former Amorous Conſtitution of mind, as the former Idol of it. I know that from a perſon, who, for one that hath never yet been hurt by *Cupid*, is accuſed of uſing him ſlightingly and ſeverely enough, you will expect Endeavours

deavours to preſerve you from Relapſes, by ſuch diſſuaſions from Love, as its Votaries will ſcarce vouchſafe ſo mild a Title to, as that of Invectives againſt it. And I ſhall Ingenuouſly acknowledge, *Lindamor*, that I have been ſometimes no very unready Satyriſt on that Theme; and with a Pen, reliſhing of the Liberty I cheriſh'd in my heart, endeavour'd to diſabuſe thoſe ſervile Souls, that being born to Reaſon, ſo far degraded themſelves, as to boaſt ſolely an exceſs of Paſſion; and had ſuch low and narrow Thoughts of Felicity and Miſery, as to expect either from a Womans uſage. All which I thought I might the freelier do, becauſe having never known the infelicities of Love, but in the ſufferings of others, I might probably ſuppoſe, that my Declamations againſt it would paſs for the productions of my Reaſon, not my Revenge. But, *Lindamor*, though the extravagancies of ſome Mens folly, have been ſometimes too great, to let me avoid laughing ſomewhat Satyrically at it; yet I am really too little an enemy to Love, unleſs exceſſive or miſ-plac'd, by indiſtinct and diſfiguring Conſiderations, to repreſent to you the Nobleſt Paſſion of the Mind, as its moſt hide-

ous and Formidable Diſeaſe.

Sect. 1. To Love, even with ſome Paſſionateneſs, the Perſon you would Marry, is not only allowable but Expedient, being almoſt neceſſary to the Duty of fixing your Affection, where you have once engaged your Faith; For, it hath been obſerv'd, that Love doth ſeldom ſuffer it ſelf to be confin'd by other Matches than thoſe of its own making. And few, but they, that are ſo Wiſe as they ſee cauſe to be almoſt in Love before hand with thoſe they Marry, prove ſo Honeſt as afterwards to be in Love with none elſe. Since therefore, the Marriage of a Wiſe man ſuppoſes at leaſt as high a degree of Love, as he is capable to cheriſh without forfeiting that Title; I can ſcarce diſallow the being moderately in Love without being injurious to Marriage, which is a Relation, that though I can with much leſs reluctancy Permit others, than Contract my ſelf; yet dare I not abſolutely condemn a condition of Life, as expedient to No man, without which, even Paradiſe and Innocence were not ſufficient to compleat the Happineſs of the Firſt Man. Thus you ſee, *Lindamor*, that I do not promiſcuouſly Quarrel with all ſorts of Love, but endeavour

deavour onely to poſſeſs you with this Truth, That as antiently, among the Jews, there were odoriferous Unguents, which it was neither unuſual nor unlawful to annoint themſelves with, or beſtow upon their Friends; but there was a certain peculiar Compoſition too, of a pretious Oyntment, which God having reſerv'd to be employ'd in his own Service; with that, the Perfuming of their Friends was Criminal and Sacrilegious: So there are regulated degrees of Love, which 'tis not forbidden to harbor for a Friend, a Miſtriſs, or a Wife; but there is too a certain peculiar ſtrain, or (if I may ſo call it) heroick Temperament of Love, which, where ever it is found, makes it belong, as unalienable, as juſtly, unto GOD. A virtuous Wife may love both her Huſband's Relations and her own, and yet be truly ſaid to Love him with her whole Heart; becauſe there is a certain unrivall'd degree of Kindneſs, and a peculiar ſort of Love, which conſtitutes true Conjugal affection, that ſhe confines to him, and reſerves intirely for him, and would think it Criminal to harbour for any other Perſon: So a Religious Soul may obey the Command,

of

of Loving God entirely, though she allow her Affections other Objects; provided, they be kept in a due Subordination to, and kept from entring into Competition with, that Love, which ought to be appropriated to Him; and which results chiefly from, an either altogether, or almost, unincreasable Elevation, and Vastness of Affection; from an entire Resignment to, and an absolute Dependence on, the Lov'd Party; from a restless Disquiet upon the least sense or doubt of her Displeasure; from a greater Concern in her Interests, than ones own; from an Expectation no less than Felicity or Wretchedness from her Friendship or Indignation; or at least a Persuadedness that nothing can be a greater Happiness than her Favour, or deserve the name of Happiness without it. For, where ever a Passion has these properties, or any of them, conspicuous in it; it cannot, but by being consecrated to God, avoid becoming injurious both to Him and to it self. The very Nobleness of it entitles Him to it: As in some Kingdoms, (and particularly here in *England*) though Veins of coorser Metals may belong to the Owner of the Soil they grow in, yet all the Mines of the

the more perfect Metals (as Gold and Silver) are by the Law made Mines Royal, and belong to the King, to whom their value appropriates them. By reflecting upon this peculiar Notion of Love, you may be pleas'd, *Lindamor*, to interpret such Indefinite Expressions as you may meet with in the following Discourse. And this Love, I have taken the freedom to style *Seraphick Love*, (not out of any affectation of Tumid Words or Titles, but) borrowing the name from (if the Romish Divines be good Marshals of the Heavenly Host) those nobler Spirits of the Cœlestial Hierarchie, whose Name in the Language to which it belongs, expresses them to be of a Flaming nature; and wgose imployment (mentioned in the * Evangelical Prophet's Mysterious Vision) sufficiently points at the Divine Object, to which the flames, that warm them, aspire and tend. And me-thinks, *Lindamor*, that you should find it no faint Invitation to embrace Seraphick Love, that you may have the Advantage, by making your self a Rival to

The Name *Seraphim*, In Hebrew, springs from the Root *Saraph*, which signifies to burn or flame: Whence, *Numb.* 21. 6. those pernicious creatures, that our Translators English, *Fiery Serpents*, are styled in the Original, *Hannechashim has-seraphim.*

* Isa. 6. 2, 3.

to these glorious Spirits, to make them your Friends, and the Honor to be ingaged in a Service, where you are sure of such Illustrious Concurrents. At least if you be of the mind of that generous Youth, (to whose successful Valour the Conquer'd World was both Theatre and Trophie) who refus'd to Run at the Olympick Games, because there were no Monarchs to run with him. But I fear, *Lindamor*, I have a little digress'd; since I might have told you in fewer words, that it is not my design in this Paper to declame against Love in general, or make a solemn Harangue of the Fickleness of Women; and that therefore, as when young Gallants (such as you, *Lindamor*) are subject to cast away their Love upon unfit Objects, their discreet Friends, (sensible of the truth of the Italian Comick's Observation, that

Onesta contra' amore
E troppo frale schermo
In giovinetto cuore.

In youthful Hearts have Vertues
wont to prove
But a weak shield against the
darts of Love.)

without

without taking any more than neceſſary notice of their former fond and ſtragling Paſſions, reclaim them by either matching them, or at leaſt (in order thereunto) engaging their Addreſſes to Perſons, whoſe Beauty or Prerogatives may both legitimate and confine their affections: So I ſhall now endeavour to prevent the future Gaddings of your Love to Objects, that cannot deſerve ſo tranſcendent and diſintereſt a one, as I have obſerv'd yours to have been; by preferring and engaging it to the True Object that Paſſion was born to, the Nobleſt it can aſpire to, and the moſt Satisfying it can enjoy. Yes, *Lindamor*, as it has hitherto been my not-unproſperous Task to Un-hood your Soul, I ſhall now make it my buſineſs to ſhew her Game to fly at. I ſee that Love in *Lindamor* is too Noble and Predominant an Affection, to be either Eaſie or Fit to be deſtroy'd. It will therefore be my deſign, not to Suppreſs your flame, but to Addreſs it. I wiſh'd it withdrawn from *Hermione*, not to Annihilate it, but to Transfigure it. I would not have a Paſſion which wanted nothing, but a due Object, to be Seraphick Love; like Vulgar men, be ſwallow'd up by Death, the common fate:

fate: But be ennobled by a destiny h
that of *Enoch* and *Elias*, who, havi
ceas'd to converse with Mortals, D
not, but were Translated into Heaven.

Sect. 2. What has been said already, *Lind*
mor, hath, it seems, suffic'd to recti
your Love; by Disabusing it, and shew
ing you, how unfitly it was plac'd on
former Objects. Your proficiency
That, invites me to proceed with you
a new Lesson, and (mindful of that tru
Saying of an Eminent Father, *Nemo*
liquem amat, quem non vult esse meliorem
to endeavour to exalt your passion b
Directing and Setling it upon an Ob
ject, the due Contemplation of whos
Lovelinesse may cure as perfectly a
hurts received from any Mortal Beauty
as antiently the Sight of the Mysterious
Numb. c. 21. v. 8, 9. Serpent on the Pole did cure the hurt
the fiery Serpents gave. For, since t
gaze stedfastly on an outward Beauty,
where all your looking will but discover
the same face, is found so effectual to
Kindle or to Blow the fire of Love,
(which the Greeks prettily enough ex-
press by their ἐκ τῶ ὁρᾶν γίνεται τὸ ἐρᾶν)
how much must a due Contemplation
enamour us of that Divine, and, though
Refulgent, yet ever more and more Dis-
coverable

coverable Object, where Attention and Wonder ſtill mutually excite and cheriſh each other? Whence the zealouſeſt and perfecteſt Lovers of God are the glorious Angels, of whom our Saviour ſays, that in Heaven *they always behold the face of his Father which is in Heaven*; and thoſe bleſſed Saints, whoſe imployment, and whoſe happineſs is, in the *Revelation*, expreſt to be, *To follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes.* And thoſe unblemiſh'd Perſons are in that place recorded to have kept themſelves Undefiled by mortal Beauties; to teach us, that the nearer and clearer Intuition, that Heaven affords them of the glorious Object of their Paſſion, was, not the Cauſe of it, but the Recompence; and that whilſt they liv'd Exiles here on Earth, 'twas ſuch a ſpeculation, as I am recommending (*Lindamor*) to You, wherewith they liv'd (to borrow the Expreſſion uſed of *Moſes*) *as ſeeing him who is Inviſible*; a Sight, whoſe Glory made them look on fading Beauties, with as undazl'd and untroubl'd Eyes, as Eagles can be ſuppos'd to caſt on Glo-worms when they have been newly gazing on the Sun.

Matth. 18. 20.

Rev. 14. 4.

Heb. 11. 27.

To engage your Love, *Lindamor*, to this *Sect.* 3.

this sublimest of Objects, I shall desire, that all that I have said to divert your former Flames, and all that I may say to depreciate and discredit those degrading and disquieting Amours, that are wont to inveagle Mortals, may be look'd upon as meant, rather by way of Preparative, than of Motive, aiming but to Disabuse and Rectifie your mind, that with Compos'd and Unprepossess'd thoughts you may judge of the Object I propose to you. Which to qualifie you to be but impartial to, this Method seem'd expedient; being but imploy'd upon such a Score, as that on which the Platonists us'd to promise certain Virtues, which they (significantly enough) call'd Purgative, to dispose and fit the Mind for the Reception of sublimer truths. As Physicians to cleer the Sight are wont to purge the Head, that the Eye freed from all darkning and disguising Tinctures, may the more perfectly discern the Objects presented to it. And certainly, the Love I would persuade, is of a nature, that makes nothing more conducive to it, than the greatest Uncloudedness of the Eye, and the perfectest Illustration of the Object: which is such, that the clearest Reason is the most advantageous

Light

Light it can desire to be seen by. You know the Story of that witty Wench, who us'd merrily to wish her Lover all good Qualities, but a good Understanding; for That, said she, would make them out of Love with me. The Divine Object to which I would Prefer you, *Lindamor*, is so far from being obnoxious to a Danger of that Nature, that I need not Disparage any other to Enamour you of this. For, the Creator is too full of Excellencies to need to be recommended or set off by the Creature's Defects. He was soverainly Lovely in Himself, before they had a Being; nor has his giving us that Passion, call'd Love, made him the unfitter Object for it. To love God, but because your Mistriss has personal faults, is a greater, than any of those for which you have declin'd her; and is such a Solœciſm in Seraphick Love, as it were in the Persian Religion, (for that has yet embracers in the East, as those, that have there convers'd with them, assure me) to make the Spots that blemish the Moon the Motives of their worshipping the Sun. *Hermione* is a Lady, to whose noble Relations I am too much a Servant, not to have a Respect for Her; and I cannot,

without concluding her an Extraordinary person, remember how lately she enjoy'd the honour of Captivating *Lindamor*; and though she has since by injuriously Declining, justly Forfeited the glorious Title of his Mistris; yet the Qualities, that gave it her, made me, among divers others, like her so well, that 'tis now my Quarrel to her, that she Is not what she Was. And therefore, what ever may fall from my Pen to her disadvantage, relates to Her but as she was, or may again be, an Obstacle to your devotedness to Seraphick Love. To ingage you to which, (all this notwithstanding, *Lindamor*) I must do you the right to tell you, that God deserves the highest Elevation of your Love, though *Hermione* had not rejected it. Were she not only as Handsome as you fancy'd her, but as Constant as you wish'd her, her Beauty, and her Friendship too concurring, could not have made her other than, as Disadvantagious as Injurious, a Rival unto God; and, in the very Fruition of as obliging Returns as her Kindness could have made your Passion, she would have deserv'd but a more moderate Degree of it. Angels, to whom Women were never false or cruel,

el, love their Maker above all things: and he to whom *St. John* presents his Adoration, refuſed it for himſelf to direct it unto God. Would not your ſelf, *Lindamor*, have thought your *Hermione* abſolutely Handſome, though Moors had not worn the Devil's Livery; and the thing call'd Deformity, had been as much a ſtranger, as it is unwelcome to her Sex? 'Tis true, ſuch is our frailty, that, As the *Iſraelites* needed a cruel and oppreſſive Bondage in *Ægypt*, to make them reſolve on returning to the Bleſſed Land of *Canaan*; ſo oftentimes, the amorous Soul needs the harſh Uſage of a diſdainful Miſtreſs, to diſguſt it with its Thraldom, and make it aſpire to its more genuine and ſatisfying Object. I may therefore allow *Hermione*'s Defects to have given you Freedom and Occaſion to conſider the Prerogatives of Seraphick Love: but I muſt not allow them to be the chief Motives of your embracing it. For, it were too injurious to its glorious Object, to make that but the Refuge of a Defeated Paſſion, whoſe Tranſcendency entitles it to more than the moſt Elevated and Entire one. Alas, God needs not theſe beggerly Parallels with any fading Objects, to be-

Rev. 22. 4. & 19. 1.

come that of our disabus'd Devotion, and He were Lovely without comparison, as well as He is so Above it. And though I be not so unjust to deny, that there are Ladies (some of which I have the happiness not to be unknown to my self) whose Excellencies are capable to ennoble their whole Sex: Yet their greatest accomplishments compar'd to His Perfections, whose gifts they are, are in that Eclipsing company, as inconspicuous as the faint Qualities of more Ordinary persons. As when in a clear Morning, the Rising-Sun vouchsafes to visit us, as well those Bright Stars that did Adorn our Hemisphere, as those Dirk Shades that did Benight it, vanish: Consonantly whereunto, give me leave to observe to you, *Lindamor*, that though divers of God's Attributes are through his Goodness participated by his Creatures, yet the Scripture makes so vast a disparity betwixt the Excellencies that it ascribes to Men, and the same Perfections consider'd as they exist in God, that it seems absolutely to exclude Created Beings from any Title to those Attributes; because they possess them but in a way so Inferior to that transcendent, peculiar, and Divine manner,

manner, in which they belong to God. Thus our Saviour ſays to him that (taking him but for a Man) call'd him good, *Why calleſt thou me good? There is none good but One,* (that is) *God.* Thus St. *Paul* calls God (or Chriſt) the only Potentate, μόνος δυνάστης, though the Earth be ſhared by ſeveral Potentates; and even the devout *Eunuch* in the *Acts*, and the depoſed Grandees mentioned by the Bleſſed Virgin in her Canticle, are, in the Original, ſtyled Potentates. Thus, though there be Wiſe Virgins as well as Fooliſh; and though our Saviour tells us, That *the Children of this World are in their generations wiſer than the Children of Light*: Yet St. *Paul* ſcruples not to tearm his Maker, *the only Wiſe God*; and thus he elſe-where Paraphraſes him, *He that only hath immortality*, though Angels and human Souls be Deathleſs. In ſo Incommunicable a manner does the Superiority of God's Nature make him poſſeſs thoſe very Excellencies, which the diffuſiveneſs of his Goodneſs makes him pleaſed to Communicate. I am the more zealous, *Lindamor*, to tranſfigure your Love into Devotion, (which I muſt deſire you to look upon but as a vary'd name for

Mat. 19. 16. 19. 1 Tim. 6. 15. Act. 8 17 Luk. 1. 52 Mat. 25. 5. Luk. 16. 8. 1 Tim. 1. 17. 1. Tim. 6. 18.

Seraphick Love) becauſe I have obſerv'd your Paſſion to have been extreamly impatient of Confinement, and to have eſteem'd what ever may be tearm'd Limits to be Priſons. Few therefore can Need more, or Deſerve better, an object for their Love, for which too immenſe a vaſtneſs were impoſſible. And ſuch a one *is* God, whoſe Soveraign Perfections render him ſo uncapable of being lov'd Too Much, that the moſt aſpiring Paſſion can ſcarce arrive (ſo much, as) to Leſſen its Diſproportion to the Object. Other Paſſions, like other Rivers, are moſt lik'd, when they calmly flow within their wonted Banks: But of *Seraphick Love*, as of *Nilus*, the very Inundations might be deſirable, and his Over-flowings make him the more welcome. For mortal Beauties, our paſſions are like our ſelves: If our Stature chance to exceed a certain ſize or Standart, it makes us Monſtrous; but Devotion is like a flawleſs Diamond, where the Bigneſs taxes the Value, and the unuſual Bulk both rates and inhances the Luſtre and the Price. To give GOD All our Love is the greateſt Command both of the Law and Goſpel (in its capacious and teeming Womb, both Com-

Compriſing and Cheriſhing all the other *Services* God requires) and that there is not more exacted of us, is not, that an Addition were Culpable, but becauſe it is Impoſſible. So noble is the nature of Devotion, that it admits of failings but by one of the Extremes, which is that of Defect. For, Mediocrity, (whoſe Office 'tis to reſtrain us from approaching the utmoſt Limits) which in other Paſſions is an Excellence, is here an Imperfection. Or, at leaſt, if Mediocrity be that which creates Paſſions Virtues, the Mediocrity of this Love muſt conſiſt *in* the Boundleſneſs of it, ſince that *is* it which makes it moſt a Virtue. The Man after God's own heart is not afear'd to own even to his Maker an ardency of Love for Him, which muſt be expreſt by the ſignificant Metaphor of Thriſt; and that ſuch a Thirſt too, as makes the panting Hart (by Naturaliſts obſerved to be a very Dry Creature) *bray* (as I remember the Hebrew hath it) for thoſe refreſhing ſtreams, whoſe want diſtreſſes and reduces her to an almoſt gaſping condition: *My* very *Soul* (ſaith he) *thirſteth for God.* And we know, that Thirſt is not onely ſo violent an appetite, that it

Pſal. 42. 1. *Cervina caro ſicca eſt, &c.* Sennert. *Inſti. De Alimentor. facultatibus.* lib. 4. part 1. cap. 3.

verſ. 2.

leſſens the Wonder of that Monarch's Bargain, whom Hiſtory records to have parted with his Kingdom for a Cup of water: But thirſt doth ſo confine our Longings to what It craves, that nothing elſe can ſatisfie them. The wealth of both the *Indies* would not excuſe the want of a needed Cup, ſuppoſing their Poſſeſſor tormented with an Appetite, which cannot be quench'd but by Drink. To which I muſt add, that the uneaſineſs of unrelieved Thirſt, is not, like that of other inconveniences, leſſen'd by Continuance, but grows by Laſting the more Unſupportable. The ſame inſpir'd Poet ſcruples not alſo to profeſs ſo ſenſible and ſo active a Concern for God's Intereſts, that the *zeal of God's Houſe had eaten him up*; and hugely troubled he is, that others are not affected with the ſame Zeal. *I beheld* (ſays he) *the Tranſgreſſors, and was grieved, becauſe they kept not thy Word.* Nay, *Rivers of waters,* ſays he, *run down mine Eyes, becauſe they kept not thy Law*; and to manifeſt how much the tenderneſs and unreſerv'dneſs of his Love, made him think thoſe his friends or enemies, that were ſo to God, *Mine eyes* (ſays he) *ſhall be upon the faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with me:*

Pſal. 119. 158.

Ibidem v. 136.

Pſal. 101. 6.

me: He that walketh perfect in the way, he shall serve me. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee, and am not I grieved with those, that rise up against Thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies. At this Rate did pious *David* love his Maker; but he was so far from thinking this Rate Excessive, that, transported by the sense of his Personal Disability to pay that Divine Object all the Love that his Perfections merited; he is not content to rouse up all his own faculties to praise God, (*Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name*) but he invites all the Godly to assist him in the Payment of so vast a Debt. (*Love the Lord all ye Saints, for, &c.*) And again, (*Praise the Lord, all ye Nations, praise him all ye People.*) And not content neither frequently to do this, as may appear by very many passages of his sacred Poems, he extends his Invitation to the Angels, and all the other Hosts of God, and concludes the Book of Psalms with a, *Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.* Hallelujah.

Psal. 139. 21, 22.

Psal. 103. 1.

Psal. 117. 1.

Psal. 138. 2.

Nor does it invalidate what has now been delivered, that some Men have, even by Devout Persons, been blam'd for *Sect.* 4.

for too much Devotion: for, it was not an excess of Love, but a want of Discretion, that was guilty of their faults; The Expressions of our Love to God ought to be regulated, not by our blind and wild Phancies, but by his revealed Will, (as Christ says, *If you love me, keep my Commandments*) and therefore it is very possible to be Too devout, not because any Expression of Seraphick Love can be made with too much Ardency, whilst 'tis consider'd abstractedly in it self, and irrelatively to the rest; But because that there being several duties of Love, which require an Ardency of it, 'tis injurious to exercise all that in one alone, or a few, that belongs equally to the neglected others. We must not (as too many Professors are now wont to do, of whose error you may receive a fuller account in some other Papers) dash in pieces the two Tables of the Law against one another; But must so *love GOD with all our hearts*, as *to love our Neighbour as our selves*. You know what our Saviour saith to the Pharisees, that Tithed Mint, and Cummin, with a neglect of Judgment, Mercy, and Faith, those weightier matters of the Law; *These ought you* (δεῖ) *to have*

Mat. 23. 23.

done,

done, and not to leave the other undone. And indeed this Partiality, *Lindamor*, which makes us display so much of the strength and vigour of our Spirits in some favourite-Duties, that we can but languidly and perfunctorily perform those others, we are less fond of; begets in Devotion a Disease, not unlike that new one in Children we call the *Rickets*, which some learned Physicians do not improbably conceive to arise from the Unequal Nutrition of the parts. For though none of them receive Excessive Nourishment, yet some of them receiving as much as is convenient for them, and thereby growing up to their natural bigness, whilst others are less nourish'd than (were the Body healthful) they would be, I do grow so little, that the founder parts seem Over-grown; and so the disproportion betwixt Them and the Ricketing ones makes the whole Body they compose mis-shapen and unwieldy. But, *Lindamor*, this proves not that we can love God too much, but onely that we may imploy too much of that Love, in this or that way of expressing it. Whilst we are (as *Job* speaks) *Inhabitants of these houses of clay*, there are many Duties, Iob 4. 19.

which

which do as well challenge an Intensity of our affections, as those which relate more immediately to God. As St. *Paul* tells us, That there is difference betwixt married and single Persons, the affections of the one being at liberty, to devote themselves more undistractedly to God, whereas those of the other are distracted; (as *Adam*'s were, betwixt his Maker and his Rib.) But where a direct and immediate expression of Love to God defrauds not any other Duty, there it is free from the danger of Excess. Though Praiers may easily be too long, and Fasts grow exorbitant; yet Christ could spend the whole night in Praier, and Fast forty days without immoderateness, when the other expressions of his Love to his Father and the other exercises of his Mediatory Function, were not thereby disturb'd, but further'd and promoted. And so *Elijah* might inculpably fast long, when that fasting did not disable him to prosecute his journey to the Mount of God; and though just men here on Earth must express their Love to their Master by (that busey distracting, and remoter way of Service) Tradeing with his Talent trusted to them;

1 Cor. 7. 32, 33, 34.

1 King. 19. 2.

yet

yet when their diveſture of Mortality diſpenſes them from thoſe laborious and avocating duties to diſtreſſed Chriſtians, and their own ſecular Relations, which are here requiſite to be perform'd; their Glorifi'd ſpirits may now, without any Immoderate devotion, imploy, I ſay not, their Time, but their Eternity it ſelf, in Converſing with God, and following the Lamb whitherſoever he goes. And congruouſly I obſerve, that the four myſterious Beaſts, allow'd to approach neareſt to the Throne of God, though their many wings, and more numerous eyes, intimate them of a very active nature, are repreſented to us in the Apocalypſe, as addicted but to one imployment, ceaſing *neither day nor night from ſaying, Holie, Holie, Holie, Lord God Almighty*; and from *giving Glory, and Honor, and Thanks unto him.* And of *thoſe that have whited their Robes in the blood of the Lamb*, this account is in the ſame Book given us, *that they are before the Throne of God, and ſerve Him day and night in his Temple.* So true is it, that no Degree of Seraphick Love can be Exceſſive, nay, not any Expreſſion of it Immoderate, unleſs it be made ſo, not by its Greatneſs, but by its Uſurpation,

Rev. 4. 6, 7.

verſ. 8.

Rev. 7. 14, 15.

pation; whereby it either ingrosses or invades what belongs to its injur'd and languishing Associates. Our Love unto the Creatures is a Present, but unto God it is a Tribute, and though we may easily play the Prodigals in parting (over-freely) with our Gifts, we can scarce be so in the payment of our Debts; for, be the Summs never so vast we pay away, their being Due, in spite of their being Great, makes the Disbursement too much an Act of Justice, to be one of Profuseness. *Seraphick Love*, (whose Passionateness is its best Complexion) has then most approach'd its noblest measure, when it can least be measur'd: nor ought its Extent to admit any other Limits than an utter Disability to exceed those that terminate it. For he alone loves God as much as he Ought, that loving Him as much as he Can, strives to repair the deplor'd imperfection of that Love, with an extream Regret to find his Love no Greater. Such a sublimity of Love will best entitle you to the Consolation accruing from that memorable passage of St. *John*, where he says, that *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him*. Which supplies me with a

1 Ioh. 4. 16.

forcible

forcible Inducement, to invite you to an eager aſpiring to a Tranſcendency in Devotion, ſince it may render Self-denial ſo eaſie, that 'twill (at laſt) almoſt diveſt that name. For, this ſublimer Love being, by an intimate conjunction With its Object, wholly devoted To it, and throughly refined from all baſe Droſs of ſelfiſhneſs and intereſt, nobly begets a moſt ſtrict Union of our Wills with God's, or (rather) a perfect Submiſſion of the one to the other. And thus, when it is become Your Will to obey His, no diſpenſations of Providence will immoderately diſquiet you, for, you poſſeſs your Wiſhes in General, and in Bulk, though poſſibly not always in Retail. For, your chiefeſt Deſire being to ſee your Maker's Will fulfill'd, your knowledge of his being the Soveraign and uncontroll'd Diſpoſer of the Events, aſſures you, that all Accidents that can befall you, are but exact Accompliſhments of his Will, and conſequently of Yours, ſo far forth as that is included and compriz'd in His. When you have Reſign'd, or rather Conſign'd, your expropriated Will (if I may ſo call it) to God, and thereby (as it were) entruſted him to Will for you;

all

all his Diſpoſals of, and his Diſpenſations towards you, are, in effect, the Acts of your own Will, with the advantage of their being Directed and Specified by Him. An Advantage that does at once aſſure you both of their Rectitude and Succeſs. God's Wiſdom, Power, and Love to you conſider'd, how much more happy muſt you be in your Options of his chuſing for you, than your immediate own? The Patient thinks himſelf obliged to gratifie his Phyſician for chuſing for him what ſorts of meat he is to feed on; though the Doctor be wont to make ſuch a choice for him, as deprives him of the Diſhes he beſt Likes, and oftentimes confines him to thoſe he Loaths. Alas, how often might God ſay of our Requeſts, as Chriſt did of thoſe of the two aſpiring Diſciples, *Ye know not what ye ask?* I admire, and bluſh to read in an Heathen Satyriſt ſo Heavenly a Leſſon, as,

Permittes ipſis expendere Numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, rebuſque ſit utile noſtris:
Nam pro Jucundis Utilia quæque dabunt Dî,

Charior

Charior eſt illis homo, quam ſibi: nos animorum
Impulſu, & cæca pravaque cupidine ducti,
Conjugium petimus partumque uxoris; at illis
Notum, qui pueri, qualiſque futura ſit uxor.

Unto the wiſer Gods the care permit,
Of what's for us and our affairs moſt Fit.
They will for Pleaſant things the Beſt confer;
To whom Man is, than to himſelf, more dear.
We by our Blinder Paſſions led aſtray,
Do for a Wife perhaps or Children pray:
Which they may chance refuſe us out of Love,
Knowing what both the Wife and Boys would prove.

The conſideration of which made a Heathen Philoſopher ſay, That he was wont onely in general tearms to beg Good things of the Gods, leaving it to

them to determine what things were Good for him. And indeed, our own Wishes are but too commonly as blind as *Rachel*'s, who having so eagerly longed for Children, that she impatiently
Gen. 35. 18. cries, *Give me Children or else I dye*, died in Child-bearing: And as destructive to the Wishers, as their Longings prov'd to the murmuring *Israelites*, who loathing the wholesome Manna (that
Num. 11. 33. *Bread of Angels*) God had provided for them, ate their own Bane in the Flesh they had so greedily lusted for. Thus, *Lindamor*, that so affrighting virtue of Self-denial proves to be little more than a Son's Letter of Attorney to his Father, of whose paternal Kindness and consummate Abilities in the management of affairs, his confidence amounts unto a certainty. Nay, till my second Thoughts check'd the over-forward Impetuosity of my first, I was about to add; Since God resents an Infinite satisfaction in the accomplishment of his own Will, your Making over your whole Will to God, will impart to you that Felicity, proportion'd to the degree of the Resignment. And, as the Eye, whilst by the Optick Nerve ty'd unto the Head, so chain'd, can taste delights, which it is

dead

lead to, being once ſever'd from it, though (otherwiſe) it enjoy the beſt Condition of which its inanimate Nature can be ſuppos'd to be capable: So may your Will by an Identity or Sameneſs (in Tendency, though not in Nature) with your Maker's, as 'twere Engrafted into God's, receive a New and an Enlarg'd capacity, which will enable you to contain, and reliſh Joys, highly tranſcending thoſe, which the fulleſt Fruition of your private wiſhes were able to Create. Thus Self-denial is a kind of holy Aſſociation with God, and (by making you his Partner) intereſſes you in all his happineſs, and acquiſitions. And conſonantly we ſee that Gloriſi'd Saints and Bleſſed Angels, whoſe Will have the moſt exquiſite and exact Conformity to God's, enjoy a Happineſs moſt approaching His; whereas the Apoſtate Spirits, in a confirm'd Repugnancy to his Will, find the extremity of Wretchedneſs.

But though I dare not own, *Lindamor*, ſo bold a Sally, yet I dare without Scruple improve the Diſcourſe that preceded it, to make out to you an advantagious Difference of *Seraphick Love* from Ordinary Flames. For, he that makes *Sect.* 5.

a preſent of his heart to any Mortal Beauty, even by her welcoming it, and lodging it with her own, grows ſubject to have it wounded in her Breaſt. Thoſe misfortunes reach Him that would otherwiſe terminate in Her: Her afflictions torment him, whilſt his own reprieves him; and the Felicity of two Perſons grows requiſite to make one Happy. The letting out our Love to mutable Objects, doth but Inlarge our hearts, and make them the wider Marks for fortune, and capable of being wounded in more places: For, although Love may as well make us participate the Joys, as reſent the Infelicities of the Parties lov'd; yet even the leaſt unhappy Perſons do in ſo fickle and ſo tempeſtuous a Sea, as we all find this World, meet with ſo many more either croſs Winds or ſtormy Guſts, than proſperous Gales; and we are ſo much more ſenſible of Pain, than Pleaſure, (an Aking-Corn, though leſs than a Sickneſs, unfitting us to reliſh the otherwiſe perfect health of the whole Body) that even Friendſhip it ſelf, though a much Calmer affection than Love, ought to be declin'd as injurious to our Quiet, did we conſider it but as a Partnerſhip of Fortunes, not

an Exercise of Virtues. But he, whose wiser Love settles it self on God, is not only by the Immutable and even Essential happiness of that Adorable Object, secur'd from Participated infelicities; but finds his personal crosses and distresses sweetned by considering, that What he most loves is most Happy, and as able as willing in due time to make Him so. And though *Seraphick Love* makes us partake but God's Felicities, yet his Acceptance of it makes him resent Our Sorrows: *In all their afflictions* Esa. 63. 9. *he was afflicted*, says the Prophet, of *God*, and of the *Israelites*. And so the Son of God, (who is so much One with those that love him, that both he as the Head, and they as the Members, are sometimes, as making up One Body, call'd by One Name, Christ) though as high as Heaven, above the reach of personal or immediate Persecutions, call'd out to *Saul* for an intention of harming those that lov'd him, *Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou me?* And, to demonstrate the tenderness of this Compassion, the Prophet says to the return'd *Israelites*, concerning God, *He that toucheth you, toucheth the* Zach. 2. 8. *Apple of his Eye*. Nor is God's Compassion like a Mistresses, a Grieving only,

1 Cor. 12. 12.

and an uſeleſs Pity, whereby the ſuffering Lover is oftentimes leſs comforted as it proceeds from her Kindneſs, the afflicted, becauſe it breeds her Diſquiet. But God's is a Compaſſion, thou Active, yet Serene, and worthy of Him ſelf, which, without producing the Di compoſure, produces the Effects of t moſt ſenſible Pity, by engaging him a timely Relief and Reſcue: As th freſhly mention'd Expreſſion, *In all the afflictions he was afflicted*, is immediate follow'd by, *And the Angel of his pre ſence ſaved them; in his love, and in hi pity, he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the days of Old.* Yes this Pity, for its not diſturbing God's Happineſs, enclines him not the leſs t expreſs a ſenſe of our Miſeries, an makes us find (to uſe a Scripture phraſe Heb. 4.16. as I would render it) χάριν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν, *Grace for an opportune relief*: I ſay, with the Divine Writer, *an Opportune* or *Seaſonable relief*; becauſe it comes not always when it is moſt Deſired, but when it is moſt Fit; And when that is, he that hath at once all preſent, paſt, and future things in his Proſpect, is fitteſt to determine. Chriſt's words Act. 1. 7. to his Diſciples, (*It is not for you to know the*

the Times or the Seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power) are applicable to more Cases than that which occasion'd them. The *Canaanitish* woman must put up a Refusal, and the reproachful name of a Dog, (which yet, by the way, was a Paraphrase commonly enough us'd by the Jews of the Heathen, and as such was understood by this Ἕλλενὶς *Gentile not Greek.*) The *Israelites* (comprising the Patriarchs their progenitors) were reduced to wait four hundred and thirty years, e'r they were introduced into the Promis'd Land; and during a great part of that long space of time, languish'd and groan'd under the heavy Burthens, and other as heavy Pressures, of the as cruelly as unsuccessfully politick *Ægyptians*. St. *Paul* himself pray'd the Lord thrice for the removal of that rude σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκὶ, *Thorn to the flesh* (whatever that may mean.) Nay, of the Blessed Virgin-Mother her self, her Divine Son would not be found till the third Day, though she sought him sorrowing. And *Lazarus*, to whom, even during his Sickness, he vouchsafed (a Title, to which all *Cæsar*'s were but Trifles) the style of Friend, (which emboldned the pious *Mary* to Paraphrase him

Mat. 7. 27

The Text refers her extraction to *Syrophœnicia* the same Region with *Canaan.*

Gal. 3. 17.

Ezek. 28. 24.

2 Cor. 12. 7.

Luk. 2. 48

Joh. 11. 2.

verſ. 3. by a, *He whom thou lov'ſt*) was permitted not only to Lye a-dying, but to Dye; his Reſcue being deferr'd, till it was thought impoſſible; and, was ſo indeed to any leſs power than Omnipotence. Which manifeſts, that as no degree of Diſtreſs is unrelievable by his Power, ſo no Extremity of it is inconſiſtent with his Compaſſion, no, not with his Friendſhip. He whoſe Spirit inſpired the Pro-
Mal. 3. 3. phets, is in the laſt of them repreſented under the notion of a Refiner: and 'tis not the cuſtom of Refiners to ſnatch the belov'd Metal out of the Fire, as ſoon as it feels the violence of that purifying Element, nay, nor as ſoon as it is Melted by it, but they let it long endure the brunt of the active Flames, acuated by exciting Blaſts, till it have ſtood its due time in the Fire, and there obtain'd its full Purity and Splendor. And I hope, you will give one that converſes with Furnaces, though he be no Pretender to the Philoſopher's Stone, leave to improve a Chymical Metaphor, and obſerve, that, though in Afflictions, eſpecially National or Publick Calamities, God oftentimes ſeems to make no diſtinction betwixt the Objects of his Compaſſion, and thoſe of his Fury, indiſcriminately involving

involving them in the ſame Deſtiny; yet his Pre-ſcience and Intentions make a vaſt Difference, where his Inflictions do not ſeem to make Any: As, when on the ſame Teſt, and with the ſelf-ſame Fire, we urge as well the Gold, as the blended Lead, or Antimony; but with fore-knowing and deſigning ſuch a diſparity in the Events, as to Conſume the Ignobler Minerals, or blow them off into Droſs or Fumes, and make the Gold more Pure and full of Luſtre.

Sect. 6. It is true, *Lindamor*, and (not to be ſuſpected of Partiality towards a Love which ſo little needs it, to be thought fit to be preferr'd before all other Paſſions) I ſhall acknowledge it, that the Happineſs reſulting from thoſe many Prerogatives, I have endeavour'd to diſcover to you in a Tranſcendent degree of *Seraphick Love*, is moderated by (the Effects of that Sublimity) the Eager Deſires it creates of a more compleat Fruition, of its perfect and Divine Object. Such aſpiring Sallies of the longing Soul made the languiſhing Spouſe in the *Canticles* cry out, *Stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples, for I am ſick of Love.* Such made the raviſh'd *Apoſtle* deſire *to return* (for ſo I ſhould rather tranſlate Cant. 2. 5. Phil. 1. 23.

translate the word ἀναλῦσαι there, and so
* Luk. 12. 36. I find it * elsewhere to signifie) *and to be with Christ:* And the Inspir'd Poet thus expresses his longings to the Blessed Object of them,
Psal. 42. 1, 2. *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God!* But, *Lindamor*, it was fit, that to elevate our thoughts and wishes to Heaven, some peculiar and else-where Incommunicable degrees of Joy, should be reserv'd for us there. And 'tis a good sign, and such as worldly Objects cannot boast, when the Incompleatness of our Seraphick Lover's happiness in his fruitions, proceeds not from their want of Satisfactoriness, but his want of an Entirer Possession of Them. And let me tell you, *Lindamor*, that even this uneasie State of Separation, is sweetned with as much Allay as is consistent with its being a Grief. For, the Divine Evidence and Teacher of God's love, pronouncing a Thirst after Perfection to be a Title to it, (according to those Scriptures,
Mat. 5. 6. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness: for, they shall be satisfied.* And,
Rev. 22. 17. *Let him that is a thirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of Life freely*) and

and the Joys of Heaven being ſo vaſt, that they diffuſe their Nature to all the grounded Hopes men have to obtain them; each new Aſſurance is a new Degree of them, and is acceptable to our Hope, though uneaſie to our Deſires. And theſe Baitings at compleat Felicity ſhould not be more unwelcome for the preſent Diſquiet they ſuppoſe, than the Contrary for the Zeal they argue, and the Felicity they promiſe. For this production of the Spirit in our hearts may be juſtly tearmed, as the Spirit himſelf in Scripture is, *An earneſt*; which, though by being ſuch, it confeſſes it ſelf not to be the Entire ſumm, yet is not onely a Part of it, but a Pledge: And, *Lindamor*, how Supportable is this thus-qualliſi'd Allay of the Joys of *Seraphick Love*, in compariſon of the Diſquiets and the Torments that are wont to attend Senſual Love? I ſhall not loſe time to enumerate how many it is ſuppoſed to have ſent to their Graves; becauſe, though I find thoſe Tragical Stories riſe enough in Romances, yet I find them Rarities every where but in thoſe Fabulous Compoſures; and though I have had the Curioſity to viſit ſome of thoſe warmer Regions, where the Flames of Love 2 Cor. 5. 5.

Love are thought to burn with more violence, yet (bating the Duels and the Pox) I remember not to have obſerv'd Love to have ever been the Death of any Man: unleſs, ſpeaking like Philoſophers, who make Reaſon the Eſſential Conſtituent Form of a Man, we will affirm, that Love, by dethroning Reaſon, though it leave the Lover alive, doth kill the Man. But, though I am loath to put ſo bad a Complement upon Mankind, as to ſay, That Love is wont to Deſtroy Men's lives; yet I think it would be no Calumny to ſay, It much Diſquiets them. I could ask you, How long many a Lover muſt continue a Servant to purchaſe the Honour of being taken notice of to be ſo? And I could recruit that Queſtion with pretty ſtore of others of the like nature, but that I ſuppoſe your Memory will ſave my Pen the labour of repreſenting to you the Torments of Love, which they that Feel them, would little leſs juſtly than they do frequently ſtyle Martyrdoms, if the Greatneſs only, without the Cauſe and Object of Men's ſufferings ſuffic'd to make them Martyrs. And though the Condition of Lovers be in Romances ſo dexterouſly and delightfully deſcrib'd, that not only

only Sanguine Readers are tranſported, but even I my ſelf have been ſurpriſed into Inclinations, to Admire and Envy their Felicity; yet when ſome I was concern'd for, have been really concern'd and engag'd in ſuch adventures, my Envy quickly turn'd into Pity. For, the Repulſes, the Regrets, the Jealouſies, the Fears, the Abſences, the Deſpairs, and the reſt of the afflicting Diſquiets of Lovers; though in well-writ Romances they are ſoon Read over by the diverted Peruſer; yet they are not ſo ſoon Weather'd out, nor ſo eaſily Supported by the Diſconſolate Lover, whoſe Infelicities, though they may be perhaps ſo handſomely deplored, as to Delight the Reader; yet truſt me, *Lindamor*, 'tis a much happier condition to be Free from misfortunes, than to be able to Complain Eloquently of them. And as I have with delight beheld a Storm excellently drawn by ſome rare Artiſt's Penſil; but when I was this Spring toſt by the rude Winds, that blew me out of *Holland*, I found a real Storm a very troubleſome and uneaſie thing: So the condition of a Lover, though, drawn by a ſmooth Pen, it is wont ſtrangely to affect and pleaſe us; yet when

when Men are really engaged in it, they find it full of hardships and disquiet. 'Tis a much better condition to be Look'd on, than Embrac'd; and Experience gives Men of it much (sadder and) more unwelcom Notions than Description did. Nor phancy, *Lindamor*, that the Troublesomness of your sufferings in Love proceeded but from their not being Acceptable to her for whom you endur'd them; for, had your Mistress crown'd them with Myrtle, and prov'd as kind to you as *Hymen* could have made her, yet, I fear, she could have Recompenc'd you but by Disabusing you, and could not have freed you from the Need of happiness, but onely from a Mistake concerning it. For, me-thinks, *Lindamor*, most of these Transitory Goods, that we are so fond of, may not unfitly be resembled to the Sensitive Plant, which you have admir'd at *Sion*-Garden; for, As, though we Gaze on it with Attention and Wonder, yet, when we come to Touch it, the Coy delusive Plant immediately shrinks in its displayed leaves, and Contracts it self into a Form and Dimensions, disadvantagiously differing from the former; which it again recovers·

cov[illegible]s by degrees, when touch'd no longer: So these Objects, that charm us at a distance, and whilst gaz'd on with the eyes of Expectation and Desire; when a more immediate Possession hath put them into our Hands, their former Lustre vanishes, and they appear quite differing things from what before they seem'd; though after Deprivation or Absence hath made us forget their Emptiness, and we be reduc'd to look upon them again at a Distance, they recover in most Men's eyes their former Beauty, and are as capable as before to inveigle and delude us. I must add, *Lindamor*, that when I compare to the Sensitive Plant most of these Transitory things, that are flatter'd with the title of Goods, I do not out of that number except most Mistresses. For, though I am no such enemy to Matrimony, as some (for want of understanding the Raillery, I have sometimes us'd in ordinary discourse) are pleas'd to think me, and would not refuse you my Advice (though I would not so readily give you my Example) to turn Votary to *Hymen*; yet I have observ'd so few Happy Matches, and so many unfortunate ones; and have so rarely seen Men love

their

their Wives at the rate they did, whilſt they were their Miſtreſſes; that I wonder not, that Legiſlators thought it neceſſary to make Marriages Indiſſoluble, to make them Laſting. And I cannot fitlier compare Marriage than to a Lottery; for in both, he that Ventures may Succeed, and may Miſs, and if he draw a Prize, he hath a rich Return of his Venture: But in both Lotteries there lies pretty ſtore of Blanks for every Prize. And for your particular, *Lindamor*, the World is much miſtaken in both your Humors, if *Hermione*'s and Yours be not ſo unſuitable, that (to make haſte from ſo nice a Subject) had ſhe juſtifi'd your expectation of her kindneſs, you would have poſſeſs'd the Perſon without poſſeſſing the Happineſs you expected: And might have found your ſelf as ſenſibly diſappointed by her Grant as you were by her Change.

But I forget, *Lindamor*, that I reſolv'd not to inſiſt on Parallels, and therefore, inſtead of proſecuting the Diſcourſe my Pen has ſlipt into, concerning the advantages of *Seraphick*, compar'd with ordinary, Love; I ſhall venture to encourage you to the Former,

mer, by ſhewing you, that your paſt addictedneſs to the Later, may prove ſerviceable to you in it: Yes, *Lindamor*, I ſhall not ſcruple to tell you, that your ſtrong Paſſion for *Hermione* may not a little facilitate your Devotion, partly by breaking all the Chains, excepting one, that faſtned your Affection to unſatisfying Objects, and reſtrain'd it from ſoaring to the ſublimeſt; and partly, by exalting your Paſſion to a Height fit for *Seraphick* flames. For, Love hath this of Noble, that it makes us diveſt our ſelves of Selfiſhneſs, ſlight fortune, quiet, ſafety, honour, life, and all our own Concernments, when their coming into Competition with the Lov'd parties Intereſts, may render their ſacrifice acceptable to her; and makes us think Goods or Ills deſerve thoſe names, but as they come to us From or Through Her. You could ſcarce have learn'd a better Leſſon, even from a much better Maſter; for, Love having thus accuſtom'd you to (what is thought moſt difficult in that Virtue) the Acts of Self-denial, you need almoſt but Transfer your flames from an Inferior and Miſtaken, to their True and Nobleſt Object, and you will have exalted and refined your Love into Devo-

tion; to the latter of which, a ſublime Elevation of the firſt is ſuch a Diſpoſition, as the having formerly by looſer Airs and (perchance) wanton Songs, learn'd to Improve and to Command ones Voice, is, to the skill of Singing thoſe devout Hymns and Heavenly Anthems, in which the Church-Militant ſeems ambitious to emulate the Triumphant, and Eccho back the ſolemn Praiſes and Hallelujahs of the Celeſtial Quire. And, as by Hunting, though (poſſibly) we follow but ſome poor fugitive Hare, or ſome ſuch Trifling Game, we gain that Vigor, that Sufferance, and Agility, that fits us for the Toils and Military Hardſhips that are exacted in the perſute of Glory, and of Empire: So though in Love (Devotion's Prenticeſhip) the Courted Creature be often conſiderable enough, to make our Elections fit to be numbered among ſuch as thoſe that made Love be Painted Blind; yet in the Progreſs and Conduct of our Paſſion, we contract ſuch diſ-intereſſed and reſign'd Habitudes, as, being preferr'd to ſerve Cœleſtial Objects, do excellently qualifie us for Devotion. And, in effect, a fervent Love ſeems little elſe, than Devotion miſ-addreſt,

addreſt, where our own very Expreſſions may ſerve to diſabuſe us; For, when you give your Miſtreſs the Style of Goddeſs, and talk of nothing to her, but Offering up of hearts, Adoring, Sacrifices, Martyrdoms; does not all this imply, that though it be Said to her, 'tis meant to a Divinity: which is ſo much the True and Genuine Object of Men's Love, that we cannot exalt that Paſſion for any Other, without inveſting it with the Notion and Attributes of God? As Children diſcloſe the inbred kindneſs they have for thoſe Perſons, by calling the Babies they moſt doat upon by their dear Mother's, or lov'd Nurſes Names. And, as *Aaron*, and the revolting Jews, by juſtifying to themſelves their Adoration of the Idols they had ſet up, by attributing the Title of God to what they Ador'd, did tacitly acknowledge Adoration to be due onely to the Deity: So does a Lover, by naming what he Worſhips, a Divinity, tacitly confeſs the Deity to be the proper Object of that higheſt and peculiar ſtrain of Worſhip.

Exod. 32. verſ. 4, 5. In the latter of which it is expreſly ſaid, that the Feaſt was proclaimed יהוה *To Jehovah*, the peculiar Name of the true God.

And this Truth, *Lindamor*, the very Fickleneſs of Lovers concurs to teſtifie: For, what Men call, and think Inconſtancy, *Sect.* 8.

ſtancy, is nothing but a Chaſe of Perfect Beauties, which our Love fruitleſly follows, and ſeeks in Several Objects, becauſe he finds it not entire in any One; for, Creatures have but ſmall and obſcure fragments of it, which cannot Fix, nor Satisfie an Appetite, born For, and (though unwillingly) aſpiring Unto, God: Who is proclam'd the true and proper Object of our Love, as well by Men's fickleneſs to Women, as the Angel's conſtancy to Him. Juſt as the trembling reſtleſneſs of the Needle in any but the North Point of the Compaſs, proceeds from, and manifeſts its inclination to, the Pole; its Paſſion for which, both its Wavering and its Reſt bear equal witneſs to. That unſatisfi'dneſs with tranſitory Fruitions, that Men deplore as the Unhappineſs of their Nature, is indeed the Privilege of it; as 'tis the Prærogative of men not to care for, or be capable of, being pleas'd with Whiſtles, Hobby-horſes, and ſuch fond Toys as Children doat upon, and make the ſole Objects of their Deſires and Joys. And by this you may, *Lindamor*, in ſome degree imagine the unimaginable Suavity, that the fixing of ones Love on God is able to bleſs the Soul

Soul with; ſince, by ſo Indulgent a Father, and Competent a Judge, as God himſelf, the decree'd Uncontentingneſs of all other goods, is thought richly repaired by its being but an Aptneſs to prove a Riſe to our Love's ſettling there.

And hitherto, my deareſt *Lindamor*, *Sect.* 9. I have endeavour'd to recommend unto you *Seraphick Love*, by mentioning ſome of its Properties, which ſeem to relate more to the Love it ſelf, than to the divine Object of it. But I fear you'l think, I have too long entertain'd you with Conſiderations, which beſides that they are not altogether the Importanteſt that belong to this Diſcourſe; I have been by haſte reduc'd to Pen in the unaccurate Order, wherein they offer'd themſelves to My thoughts, not the Method wherein I ſhould have preſented them to Yours.

And therefore, *Lindamor*, ſince the *Sect.* 10. Nobleſt and Supreme Motives to the Love of God conſiſt in his own infinite Perfections and Prærogatives; and ſince, the Properties of God's Love to us do advantage us much more, (and conſequently are likelier to endear Devotion to us) than thoſe of ours to Him: The former not onely moving God to Kin-

dle in us, but to Cherish and Foment, and (if our own wilful extinction interpose not) to Crown the latter: For both these reasons, I say, *Lindamor*, I doubt not but you'l think it Seasonable for me to proceed, to consider that Higher sort of Motives to Devotion, and to evince, that the several things which are wont most to Engage and Heighten our affections, do, in a peculiar and transcendent manner, Shine forth and Constellate in God. That, you know, which enamour'd you of *Hermione*, I need not prove to you, to have been your supposing her full of Lovelinesse and Excellencies in her self; and your believing, that the Love she vouchsafed you was Great, Free, Constant, or Advantagious to you. And that All these properties do not onely eminently Exist, but illustriously Concur in God, and in his Love; I must now, *Lindamor*, (with strong desires of doing it Prosperously) attempt to manifest.

Sect. 11. First then, our highest Love is made God's due by the Excellency and Prerogative of his Nature. But, trust me, *Lindamor*, when (necessitated by a Method exacted by the nature of this Discourse) I find my self engaged to say some-

ſomething by way of celebration of God's Perfections: I am very ſenſible, I can but detract from what I deſire to Praiſe, and muſt unevitably appear unable to ſpeak Worthily of a Theme, to which, even Seraphims themſelves cannot do Right. And if, as the Scripture aſſures us, thoſe things never fell under the Senſes, nor entred the Thoughts of men, 1 Cor. 2. 9. which God has reſerv'd for thoſe that love him; how Ineffable and Incomprehenſible muſt thoſe things be which he has reſerv'd for Himſelf? the infinite Superiority of his Nature above all Created Beings, placing a vaſt diſparity betwixt his greateſt communicated Vouchſafements, and his Boundleſs, and therefore to Creatures Incommunicable, Perfections.

Wonder not therefore, *Lindamor*, that my weak Eyes dare not dwell long upon an Object, which they cannot ſtedfaſtly gaze on long without being dazl'd: And do not marvel, that I ſcruple not to uſe ſeeming Hyperboles in the mention of Perfections, which make the higheſt Hyperboles but ſeeming ones: Both God's Nature and his Word declaring him to be *exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe*. If it were ſeaſonable, Neh. 9. 5.

Lindamor, to entertain our ſelves but with thoſe Attributes of God, which are Legible or Conſpicuous in the Creation; We might there diſcern the admirable Traces of ſuch immenſe Power, ſuch unſearchable Wiſdom, and ſuch exuberant Goodneſs, as may juſtly raviſh us to an Amazement at them, rather than a bare Admiration of them. And I muſt needs acknowledge, *Lindamor*, that when with bold Teleſcopes I ſurvey the Old and Newly diſcover'd Stars and Planets that adorn the upper Region of the World; and when with excellent Microſcopes I diſcern in otherwiſe Inviſible Objects, the unimitable Subtilty of Nature's curious Workmanſhip; and when, in a word, by the help of Anatomical Knives, and the light of Chymical Furnaces, I ſtudy the Book of Nature, and conſult the Gloſſes of *Ariſtotle*, *Epicurus*, *Paracelſus*, *Harvey*, *Helmont*, and other learn'd Expoſitors of that Inſtructive Volume; I find my ſelf oftentimes reduc'd to exclame with the Pſalmiſt, *How manifold are thy works, O Lord? in wiſdom haſt thou made them all!* And when I have been loſing my ſelf in admiration of what I Underſtand not, but enough

Pſal. 104. 24.

to

to Admire, and not to Comprehend; I am often obliged to interrupt or break off my Enquiries, by applying to the Works of God's Creation the Expreſſion us'd by St. *Paul*, of thoſe of his Providence, *O the depth of the Riches, both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways untraceable!* And Exclamations of this Nature may the attentive Conſideration of any other of God's Attributes deſervedly produce. But having elſe-where treated of this Subject in a peculiar Diſcourſe, I ſhall now, *Lindamor*, invite you to conſider with me, how much You, and thoſe that are Conſcious to their having Virtue enough in themſelves, to make them prize it in Others, are in love with *Cato*, *Scipio*, and thoſe other *Heroes*, that did Ennoble, and almoſt Exceed Mankind, upon the bare knowledge of their Virtues; although from them we derive no Perſonal advantage, (their Death having numerous Ages, preceded our Nativity.) Since then we pay ſo much diſintereſt Love to ſome few Faint and ill-refin'd Virtues, that ne'r did profit us: how much on ſuch a Score, and at that Rate, ſhould we Love him, who ſo poſſeſſes all Perfections, that each of his Perfections is Infinite? Were you and I

Rom. 11. 33.

our

our own Creators, *Lindamor*, and wholly independent upon God, without either Need or Hope to taste his Bounty, his native Excellencies, and what he has done for Others, should surely Ravish us, and Enamor us of Him. Though his Benefits to us did not entitle him to our Love, his Essence (the Source and onely Motive of those Benefits) would give him a Right to it; and though we ow'd him nought for what We are, we yet should owe him Love for what He is. He is that glorious Sun, From whom (as Beams) all created Perfections flow, and In whom they all concentre. To omit God's Soveraign Majesty, (which places him so high, that but to own for him so Familiar and Levelling an affection as Love, much more to expect to be Relov'd by Him, were not the least sawcy Presumption Man could be guilty of, did not his own Commands make it a Duty.) Not to insist on this, I say, Let us a while consider that proper and peculiar attraction of Love, his Lovelinesse; which is such, that, did we but once see it, all Creature-competitions (even we being Judges) would then be as Impossible as they are now Unjust. In *the Fifth Evangelist*'s Prophetick Vision, the Seraphims them-

Esa. 6. 7.

themſelves (thoſe glorious Ornaments of the Cœleſtial Hierarchy) are repreſented as Covering their faces in God's preſence, either Bluſhing at their Comparative Deformity, or Unable to Suſtain the unqualifi'd Splendor of ſo Divine Brightneſs; whence perhaps it became of old the Jewiſh faſhion (as ſome frequent Expreſſions in their Writers intimate) when they went to Pray, to Veil their heads and faces; (though now I have in their Synagogues ſeen them onely Cover their heads, not their faces, with thoſe white Garments they wear at their publick Devotions.) And, *Lindamor*, if *Moſes*'s face, by but a few days Converſe with God, reflected ſuch a Light as dazl'd mortal Eyes; and if his ſwift Poſts the Angels, when ſent on Errands to us here on Earth, even when they may be ſuppos'd (if I may ſo ſpeak) to wear their Travelling Cloaths, and ſtoop as much to our frailty in the Form, as the Region, they appear to us in, do, in ſpight of that darkning Condeſcenſion, ſo much Tranſcend all Objects here on Earth, that the Scripture often mentions, That even thoſe that aſpir'd to imitate their Virtues, were confounded at their Preſence: And if, in this veiling Habit, they appear ſo glorious, that

that their thus disadvantag'd Beauty is made the Complement and Hyperbole of that Quality; what may we, or rather what may we not, conclude of God himself, of whom the Scripture says, *He that* Psal. 94. 9. *planted the Ear shall he not hear? he that formed the Eye shall he not see?* That is, He that Imparts a Faculty, or an Excellence to the Creature, shall not he himself much more eminently Possess it? And in effect, the most unblemish'd Created Beauties are but faint Shadows (or trulier, Foils) of His. Those drops of Prettiness, scatteringly sprinkled amongst the Creatures, were design'd to Defæcate and Exalt our Conceptions, not to Inveigle or Detain our Passions; for, God did ne'r intend them to Terminate our Love, but onely by our Eyes to exalt our Faith above them, and by the Beauties our Sight can apprehend, to raise us to a Confidence, that there is in their Author more than we can either See or Comprehend. Like *Elijah*'s fiery Chariots, though they 2 King. 2. 11. be Pure and Bright, and consist of the Noblest and Gloriousest materials, they are meant by God but to carry us up to Him. And as the Patriarch's Steward was furGen. 24. 10---53. nish'd so sumptuous an Equipage to court *Rebecca*, not for himself, but for

Isaac;

ac; so all the Lovelineſs imparted to e Creature is lent it, but to give us ſome ore inlarg'd Conceptions of that vaſt Confluence and Immenſity that exube-ates in God. To make the righteſt uſe of ading Beauties, you muſt conſider God nd them, as you were wont to do your Miſtreſs's Picture and its Cryſtal Co-er: Where, though that native Glaſs were Pure and Lovely, and very richly edg'd, yet to gaze on it was not the Chiefeſt Buſineſs of your Eye; nor did you in it Terminate your Sight, but gree-dily look Through and Beyond it, upon the adored Image that ſolid veil betraid. Me-thinks *Seraphick* and our common *Lovers* behold Exterior Beauties with a Difference reſembling that wherewith Children and Aſtronomers conſider *Ga-lileo*'s Optick Glaſſes, (with one of which *Teleſcopioes* that I remember I ſaw at *Flo-rence*, he merrily boaſted that he had, *Trovato la Corte a Giove*) which the one prizes moſt for what they Appear; the other, for what they Diſcover. For Chil-dren contenting themſelves to wonder at the Length, and fall in love with the Workmanſhip and Gildings of the Tube, do thus but Gaze upon them; whereas Aſtronomers Look Through them, and,

ſcarce

ſcarce taking notice of the unuſual Or
ments, or the Shape, employ them
find out unknown Lights in the Sky,
to deſcry in Heaven bright Stars, unſe
before, and other Cœleſtial Novelti
and Beauties.

Sect. 12. I deny not, *Lindamor*, that God h
been pleaſed to adorn ſome of his Cre
tures with Hints and Impreſſes, as well
his Lovelineſs as his other Excellencies
but they do much more faintly and im
perfectly reſemble Him, than the counter
feit Sun we ſometimes ſee in a Clou
emulates the True one, by whoſe Re
fracted and Reflected Beams, ſome acu
modern Naturaliſts ſuppoſe it to be pro
duc'd. For though this Derivative Su
ſhine with a not-inconſiderable Luſtre
comparatively to the reſt of the dar
Cloud it ennobles, yet is it not onely a
much inferiour to the true Sun in Bright
neſs, as in Height; but it enjoys alone a
Precarious, Dependent, and almoſt Mo
mentary Being, which often it loſes in
a very Short time, and never attains to
preſerve a very long one. And therefore,
to neglect that ſupreme Reſplendency
that ſhines in God, for thoſe dim Repre
ſentations of it, that we ſo doat on in the
Creature, is as præpoſterous, and ab
ſurd,

urd, as it were for a Persian to offer his Sacrifice to a Parhelion, (as the *Greeks* call that Meteor) instead of adoring the Sun. And certainly, *Lindamor*, if our Dim sight, like that of the Prophet's Servant, who saw the Mountains near *Dothan* covered with Horses and Chariots of Fire, were privileg'd to discern otherwise Invisible Objects; our ravish'd Eyes would behold Lovelinesse enough in God, to make us incessantly exclame in the Language of the Prophet, *How great is his Goodness, and how great his Beauty*! Agreeably whereunto we may observe, That as the Load-stone doth attract most powerfully the brightest Needles, made of the purest Steel, and those that most approach it; so Angels, who, of all Created Beings, enjoy the unclouded'st Light, and the most clear Knowledge of their Maker, do love him with a Constancy so fix'd, that in five thousand and some odd Centuries of Years, (effluxd since the Creation) they could never see any thing, either In God, or Out of Him, capable to seduce them to a Change. God's Lovelinesse (which is such, that the Eternal Fruition of himself Creates even His Felicity) is like rare Musick, which, though it do delight all its partakers, the Knowingest Artists still

2 King. 6. 27.

Zach. 9. 17.

do

do highlieſt Value, and are moſt raviſh
with the Tranſports it produceth, be
proportion'd to the degrees of the Sk
fulneſs of its admirers. The Apoſta
Spirits indeed deſerted their firſt Statio
not frighted thence by any blemiſh th
deſcry'd in God; but probably fell by
ſawcy Affectation of a Parity, and (
Divines tell us) a Sacrilegious aſpiring
Perfections, which they were criminall
unable to behold, without wiſhing the
their own. And for their preſent Separati
on from God, it is their Curſe and Puniſh
ment. And I ſhall ingenuouſly confeſs t
you, *Lindamor*, that by the advantagiou
Idea's I entertain'd of God's Perfections,
have been ſomtimes inclin'd to think, tha
the reaſon why God tells *Moſes*, *Thou ca*
Exod. 33. 20. *not ſee my face, for there ſhall no man ſee m*
and live, might be, that, (as Tranſcenden
Objects deſtroy the Senſe) ſo Lovely an
Glorious a ſight (whoſe Continuance
ſhall make our Happineſs in Heaven)
would let in Joys, and would create De-
ſires, too Mighty for frail Mortality to
ſuſtain. The raviſh'd Soul being ſhewn
ſuch Game as That, would bate ſo eager-
ly, that ſhe would break thoſe Leaſhes
that tie her to the Body, (and thereby
hinder her flight to that wiſh'd Union)

and

and the glad Heart (too narrow a Receptacle for so much Joy) to make room for such Guests, would stretch unto a Rupture. Longing or Joy, have sometimes singly reach'd Degrees, that have made them Fatal; And why then should their Union in such Extremes be thought uncapable of producing the like effect? Nor is it perchance more a Privilege of the next Life, that we shall then see God, than that we shall survive that glorious Sight; which is too dazling an Object for Mortal Eyes, till (to use St. *Paul*'s Expression) *our mortal shall have put on immortality*. But I must no longer lose my self in a Theme, on which it is so easie to speak Much, and so impossible to say Enough. If I be not very much mistaken, they are so, who presume to give us satisfactory Definitions of Gods Nature, which we may perhaps more safely Define by the Impossibility of its being accurately Defined. And I must confess, I do the least expect the best Description of the Divine Nature, from those that are most forward to take upon them to Explicate it: For our Words being but the Representations of our Notions, and they being necessarily Finite, as our Being; few men are (me-thinks) more likely to be mistaken in the Nature of what's Infinite,

1 Cor. 15. 54.

(and consequently of God's Attributes) than those that think Descriptions can comprize it. Nor will an Assiduity and Constancy of our Speculations herein relieve us; for too fix'd a Contemplation of Gods Essence does but the more confound us. As I remember, St. *Paul* tells the Jews, that he *could not see for the Glory of that light*, that shon from Heaven about him at his Conversion. And this the famous *Simonides* experimentally found, who being ask'd what God was, took a days time to consider of it; after, being call'd upon for his answer, he desir'd Two days longer to think upon it; and, when they were expir'd, demanded Four days longer; and so continu'd a great while, each time Encreasing his Demands for Respite; till, being prest to give an Account of such a Dilatory way of proceeding, he ingenuously acknowledg'd, that the longer he Consider'd Gods Nature, the less he Comprehended it. And indeed, Experience teacheth us, that they that gaze stedfastliest on the noon-days Sun, can least of all discern what it is, being rather Dazl'd than Instructed by so confounding an Object. Nor, is it onely, *Lindamor*, a task of too great Difficulty for a meer Man, perfectly to Explicate that Incomprehensible Nature of God, to which

Act. 22. 6, 11.

which nothing but his own Infinite Understanding can be adæquate: But, methinks, even to Celebrate God's Perfections, cannot be soberly attempted without a very deep sense of a Man's own Unworthiness and Incapacity. For, the same Excellencies that furnish us with Praises, do transcend them. And the fruitfulness of the Subject may as well deterr, as invite our Pens; since, as we are sure we shall not want Theme, so we are certain we cannot Dignifie it. And for my part, *Lindamor*, though my Subject exacted of me the Praises I have endeavoured to ascribe to God, yet I should have thought it requisite rather to decline the Laws of Method, than be reduc'd to Derogate from what I would Extol: If the Necessity of Detracting from Gods Perfections were not equal to that of Mentioning them; and if that Necessity were not as Glorious to God, as greater Praises than we are able to ascribe him, could be. But, *Lindamor*, having thus done Right to my Method, though I could not to my Theme, I shall onely invite you to imitate with me those Persians, that Adored the Sun, thought the Light he lent them serv'd but to make the source of it Admired, and not to Pry into his abstruse Essence with it. And though I might say much

much more concerning God's Perfections, I must henceforth think Silence the propereſt Language I can now employ; for 'tis Silence that beſt expreſſes our Wonder: And ſure, Wonder is never more ſeaſonable than when God is the Object; A proſtrate Veneration being the ſafeſt Apprehenſion of Him that is Incomprehenſible.

Sect. 13. Having thus conſidered, *Lindamor*, how fit an Object God is of our higheſt Love, for what he is in Himſelf; let us now proceed to derive further proofs of the ſame Truth, from what he is to Us, (that your Gratitude may contend with your Reaſon, which ſhall moſt heighten your Devotion) and we ſhall find in the Vaſtneſs, Freeneſs, Diſ-intereſtneſs, Conſtancy, and Advantagiouſneſs of his Love to us, that more than All the Love we can Pay him, were but a little part of that we owe him.

But for the firſt Attribute, we have aſſign'd his Love, (the Greatneſs of it) it being a General Property, diffuſed Through all the reſt, and conſpicuous in them, it requires now to be treated of apart.

We ſhall then proceed to the Freeneſs or unmeritedneſs of God's love; To be-

lieve

lieve which ſtrangely Vaſt, we need but conſider, that we ſo little could at firſt Deſerve his Love, that he lov'd us even before we had a Being: And our Felicity, in his Degrees, preceded our Exiſtence in this World. God lov'd you numerous Ages before you Were; and his Goodneſs is ſo entirely its own Motive, that even your Creation (ſince when alone you can pretend to merit his love) is the Effect of it. This Benefit alone were ſufficient to render God the Object of our Love, though We were that of his Averſion. For (as the Perſians ador'd the Sun even when it ſcorch'd them) we eſteem our ſelves oblig'd to love and honour our Parents in ſpight of their being wicked and unkind, though they be but God's Inſtruments in our Production, and made us what we were Born, not Arbitrarily, but in virtue of his Ordination. But God, to confer on us, in the moſt excellent and endearing manner, the bleſſing promis'd to his antient People, when he vouchſafed to aſſure them, that *he would love them freely*, was pleaſed to love us, not onely when we were Not at all, but when we were his Enemies; *If when we were enemies* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, &c. Our Inexiſtence Hoſ. 14. 4. Rom. 5. 10.

indeed was a Condition, wherein nothin
in us was capable of being a Motive
God's Love: But our Enmity proceede
further, and made us worthy of his De
testation; as if his Love were nothing u
less it Vanquish'd Obstacles, as well
Wanted Motives. This gave the Apo
stle a just cause to say, that *God Commen*
Rom. 5. 8. *deth his love towards us, in that while we we*
yet sinners Christ died for us: That is, whe
we wanted all Motives to invite his Love
unless our very Want of them shoul
pass for one. And how did God expre
his Love unto us? Even by the Gift of th
Joh. 3. 16. Son of his love; *For God so loved the world*
(says the divine Token of his Love) *th*
he gave his only begotten Son. And how di
Phil. 2. 6, that Son Love it? *He* (says the Apostle
7, 8. *being in the form of God, thought it no rob*
bery to be equal with God; but made himsel
of no reputation, and took upon him the for
of a servant, and was made in the likeness o
men. And being found in fashion as a man
he humbled himself, and became obedien
unto death, even the death of the Cross. That
is, That he would love at no less Rat
than Death; and from the supereminen
heighth of Glory, stoop'd and abas'd him
self to the sufferance of the extremest o
Indignities, and Sunk himself to the bot
tom

tom of Abjectedneſs, to exalt our condition to the contrary Extreme. *He was* Iſa. 53. 5.
wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed, ſays the Prophet. *For ye know the* 2. Cor. 8.
grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that though 9.
he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich; ſays the Apoſtle. Men having diſpleaſed God, and conſequently forfeited all Right and Natural Poſſibility to Happineſs; even whilſt they compleated the Forlornneſs of their condition, by the Lethargy of not being ſenſible of it, and were as Careleſs to Seek means of Recovery, as they had been Unable to Deviſe them of themſelves: Even then, his reſtleſs Love would never be at quiet, till it had ſet his Omniſcience on work, to contrive Expedients, and find out a way to reconcile his Juſtice and his Mercy, in reconciling Sinners to Himſelf. And this merciful Deſign, by the Incarnation of his Son, he proſecuted in a way ſo Worthy of Himſelf, and ſo Advantagious to Us, that our juſt wonder at it may keep us from having any, to find that, as St. *Peter* informs us, the very Angels (prompted, queſtionleſs, by a Religious Curioſity)

1 Pet. 1. 12. ardently *desire to look into* those Divine Mysteries. I find it hotly disputed amongst Divines, (not onely betwixt the Socinians and the Orthodox, but betwixt Orthodox and Orthodox) Whether or no God could, without violating his Justice, have devised any other Course for the Expiation of Sin, than the Passion and Death of Christ. But, without venturing to Determine, whether or no God Could, to Redeem us, have chosen any Other way; We may safely think, that he Has chosen the most Obliging and most Endearing way; displaying in this Divine Manner of Rescuing us, the severest Justice, and the highest Mercy; the greatest Hatred of Sin, and the greatest Love to Sinners: Since by those unequall'd and unvaluable Sufferings, to which he delivered up for us that Son, who is so near unto Joh. 10. 30. him, that he truly said, *I and the Father are one*, He at once manifested both how much he Hated Sin, which he so heavily punish'd in the Person he most Lov'd; (though that Surety but Adopted it, to free Men from the Insupportable vengeance of it) and How much he Lov'd Sinners, by giving up what he so Lov'd for a Ransome of those that were guilty of what he so Hated. And therefore our Saviour;

viour, though he did such great things to satisfie the unbelieving and contumacious Jews of his being their promis'd *Messiah*, would not Decline Death to convince them; And, though he had not seldom done so much to make himself the Object of their Faith, would not be invited from the Cross, though the chief Priests and Scribes themselves said at his Crucifixion, *Let him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe on him.* Mat. 23.7. And Christ, to convince the World of their unableness to emerge and recover out of that deep Abyss, wherein the Load of sin (which in Scripture is call'd *a weight*) had Precipated fall'n Man, came not into the World until well nigh 4000. years of Sickness had made the Disease Desperate, and the Cure almost Hopeless. Heb. 12.1. So inveterate an obstinacy at once widening the Distance betwixt God and Man, and proclaiming the laters Disability to find by his own wisdome, Expedients of Reunion. Thus Christ heal'd and dispossess'd a Dumb person, who was able to make entreaties but by the Disability of pronouncing them; and might truly say to the secure World, *I am found of them that sought me not.* Mat. 9.32. Isa. 65.1. And when our Saviour was come into the wretched World, of

all

all the numerous Miracles recorded in the Gospel, he scarce did any for his own private Relief. And to shew, that as he endured his Sorrows for our sakes, that by
Isa. 53. 5. *his stripes* we might *be healed*; so were the Joys he tasted in Relation to Us. We read not (which is highly observable) in the whole Gospel, that ever he rejoyc'd but once, and that was, when his return'd Disciples inform'd him, that they had Victoriously *chas'd Devils* and *Diseases* out of
Luk. 10. *oprressed Mortals*, and that by his *Authority* men had been *dispossess'd* of both the Tempter and Punishment of Sin. He convers'd among his Contemporaries with Virtues, as well attesting what he was, as Prophecies or Miracles could do; and, to teach Man, how much he valu'd Him above those Creatures that Man makes his Idols, he often altered and suspended the Course of Nature, for Man's Instruction, or his Relief, and revers'd the Laws establish'd in the Universe, to engage Men
Mat. 12. 24. to obey those of God, by doing Miracles so numerous and great, that the Jews Unbelief may be almost counted One. Yet
Mat. 3. 12. were those wonders wrought for a Generation that ascrib'd them to the Devil, and Return'd them with so unexemplify'd an Ingratitude, that 'tis not the least of his wonders,

wonders, that he would vouchsafe to work Any of them for such blasphemous wretches: Who were indeed, as some of the Later Jews have too truly styl'd Themselves, in relation to their Fathers, *Chometz ben ya-yin*, Vinegar the Child of Wine, a most degenerate Off-spring of holy Progenitors. He suffered so much for them, that made him do so, that he suffered the Addition of Misery of being thought to suffer Deservedly; *And he was numbred with the Trangressors.* Isa. 53.12. And though he Liv'd as much a Miracle as any He Did, yet did his Condition sometimes appear so Despicable and Forlorn, that men could not know his Deity but by his Goodness, which was too Infinite not to belong Incommunicably to God. And though 'twere once a saying of our Saviours, *Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his Friends*; Joh. 15.13 yet is not, what is said of the Love here mention'd, to be understood of Love Indefinitely, or generally considered, but only of the single Acts or Expressions of a man's love to his frinds Compar'd betwixt themselves. And so the alleg'd passage seems to mean but this, That among the single Acts of kindness to a man's friends, there is not any One more highly expressive of a real and

and ſincere Love, than to part with ones Life for their ſakes. This Text therefore would not be Indefinitely applied to the affection of Love it ſelf, as if it could not poſſibly be Greater than is requiſite to make a man Content or Willing to dye for his friends; for he that ſacrifices beſides his Life, his Fortune alſo, his Children, and his Reputation, does thereby expreſs more love to them than he could do by parting with his Life only for them. And he that is forward to Dye for thoſe that Hate him, or, at leaſt, know him not, diſcloſes a more plentiful and exuberant ſtock of Love, than he that does the ſame Kindneſs but for thoſe that Love him. And thus our Saviour would be underſtood, unleſs we would ſay, that he Outpractis'd what he Taught; for, he came to lay down his Life even for his Enemies, and (like the kind Balſom-Tree, whoſe healing-wounds weep Soveraign Balm to cure thoſe that made them) he refus'd not to Dye for thoſe that Kill'd him, and ſhed his Blood for ſome of them that Spilt it. And ſo little was his injur'd Love to the ungrateful World diſcourag'd or impair'd by the ſavage Entertainment he met with in it, that, after he had ſuffer'd from wretched men (for whoſe ſakes he left Heaven

en to become capable of ſuffering) ſuch barbarous Indignities, as might have made bare Puniſhments appear Mercy, and even Cruelty it ſelf ſeem no more than Juſtice; when I ſay, to hope for ſo much as his Pardon were Preſumption; he was pleas'd to Create Confidence of no leſs than his Love, a Virtue. Nor think it, *Lindamor*, impertinent to our preſent Theme, that I inſiſt ſo much on what Chriſt has Done and Suffer'd for us, ſince both he himſelf informs us, that *He and his Father are one*: And ſome of the Texts already mention'd have taught us, that 'twas an effect of God's love alſo to the World, that *He gave his only begotten Son to Redeem* it; and, That *God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners Chriſt dyed for us.* Wherefore I ſhall without Scruple proceed to obſerve to you, That ſo Free is Chriſt's dilection, that the grand condition of our Felicity is our Belief, that he is diſpoſed to make us Happy; on Tearms, not only ſo Honorable to him, but ſo Advantagious to us, that, I was about to ſay, That poſſibly Faith it ſelf would ſcarce be exacted as requiſite to our Happineſs, but that the Condition does encreaſe the Benefit, by vouchſafing us bold and early Anticipations of it: For,

Joh. 10. 30. *See alſo* Joh. 14. v. 9, 10, 11.

Joh. 3. 16.

Rom. 5. 8.

Faith

Faith being (as the Apostle tearms it) the
Heb. 11.1. *substance of things hoped for, and evidence* (or conviction) *of things not seen*, wafts our Joys to this side of the Grave, bows Heaven down to us, till our freed Spirits can soar up to Heaven; and does us such a service, as the Jewish Spies did to their Country-men, by bringing them over to
Numb. 13. 23, 27. This side *Jordan* into the Wilderness, some of the pleasant and Delicious Fruits of the blest Land of Promise. I said, *Lindamor*, that Faith was the grand Condition required in God's free grant of Eternal Life. Not that I would ascribe any thing to a Lazy, Speculative, and Barren Faith, in opposition to that lively and Active one, which is called by the Apostle,
Gal. 5. 6. πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη, *Faith operating by Love*; since I am informed by St. *James*,
Jam. 2. 26. that the Divorce of Faith and Works is as Destructive to Religion, as that of Soul and Body is to Life: But that I was willing to mind you, that though true Faith
Gen. 30. (which cries like *Rachel*, *Give me Children or else I dye*) be ever the pregnant Mother of good Works, yet are not those Works the Cause, but the Effects and Signs of God's first Love to Men, (however afterward the Children may Nurse their Parents.) As, though the Needle's point-

ing

ng at the Poles be, by being an Effect, an Argument of its having been Invigorated by the Loadſtone, or received Influence from ſome other Magnetick Body; yet is not that Reſpect unto the North the Cauſe, but the Operation of the Iron's being drawn by the attractive Mineral. *Thou art good, and doſt good*, ſays the Pſalmiſt to his Maker. The greatneſs of his Goodneſs is that which makes it Ours; not doth He do us good, becauſe that We are good, but becauſe He is liberally ſo; as the Sun ſhines on Dunghils, not out of any Invitation his Beams find there, but becauſe it is his Nature to be diffuſive of his Light. Yet with this difference, that whereas the Sun's Bounty, by being rather an Advantage to us than a Favour, deſerves our Joy, and not our Thanks, becauſe his Viſits are made Deſignleſly, and without any particular Intention of addreſs, (by ſuch a bare neceſſity of Nature, as that which makes Springs flow out into Streams, when their Beds are too narrow to contain the renewed water that doth inceſſantly ſwell the exuberant Sources;) God on the contrary, for being neceſſarily kind, is not leſs Freely or Obligingly ſo, to You or Me; for, though ſome kind of Communicativeneſs be Eſſential

Pſal. 119. 68.

Essential to his Goodness, yet his Extension of it without Himself, and his Vouchsafing it to this or that particular Person, are purely Arbitrary. To omit his Love to the numberless Elect Angels; the strict Relations betwixt the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, supplying God with Internal Objects, which imploy'd his Kindness before the Creation, and Himself being able to allow his Goodness the Extent of Infinity for its Diffusion. But (having glanc'd at this onely by the By) we may yet further admiringly observe, That whereas Men usually give freeliest where they have not given before, and make it both the Motive and the Excuse of their desistance from giving any more, That they have given already: Gods bounty hath a very different Method; for he uses to give, because he Hath given, and, that he May give. Consonantly to which, when the revolting *Israelites* had broken the Contents, whilst *Moses* was bringing them the Tables, of the LAW, and had thereby provok'd the Incensed Giver of it to the thoughts of a suddain Extirpation of so Ingrateful and Rebellious a People; we may observe, That, whereas God, as unwilling to remember his former Goodness to them, speaking to *Moses*, calls them;

them, *Thy People which thou broughteſt out of the Land of Ægypt: Moſes*, on the other ſide, to engage God to the New mercy of a Pardon, repreſents to God his Former mercy to them, and calls them *God's People*, which *He brought forth out of the Land of Ægypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand.* And ſo conſpicuous in the Eternal Son was this property of the Merciful Father, that when ſick *Lazarus*'s Siſters implored his Reſcue for their exſpiring Brother, the Motive they employ, and which Proſper'd their addreſſes, was, *Lord, behold,* (not, he who loveth thee, but) *he whom thou loveſt, is ſick.* And as he takes the firſt Inducements of his Bounty from Himſelf; ſo do his former Favours both invite and give Rates to his ſucceeding Bleſſings. And there is reaſon for it: For his pure Love being all the Merit, by which Man can pretend to the Effects of his Bounty; it is but juſt, that the Degree of his Love ſhould Proportion thoſe Favours, which 'tis our only Title to; and that God's Liberality ſhould as well afford Meaſures, as Motives to it ſelf.

Exod. 32. 7. verſ. 11. Joh. 11. 3.

Nor is God's love leſs Diſ-intereſs'd than Free. His grand Deſign upon us is but to make us Inſtruments and Partakers of His Glory, and to bring us to everlaſt-

Sect. 14.

ing Happiness, by a Way that does as well elevate and dignifie our Nature; as the Condition reserv'd for us will. His Method of saving us, if but compli'd with, does here, as the Apostle speaks, *Fit us for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*; We being made (as St. *Peter* speaks) *Partakers of the Divine Nature, having escap'd the corruption that is in the world through Lust.* So that those things, wherein the noblest of the Philosophers plac'd their Felicity, serve but to Qualifie and Prepare Christians for that Higher Blessedness that is reserv'd by God for those that love him; and cannot but be heightned and endear'd by the Value, which Graces and Virtues had given men on Earth, for such a Noble and Rational kind of Happiness, as is apportion'd to them in Heaven. What ends can he have upon us, whose Goodness and his Blessedness are both Infinite? He was unconceivably Happy (in his own Self-sufficiency) before the Creatures had a Being; and sure that Felicity that needed not Themselves to be supreme, needs nothing that they can do. Nor was it his Indigence that forc'd him to make the World, thereby to make new Acqui-

Col. 1.12.

2 Pet. 1.4.

---- *Quid enim immortalibus atque beatis, Gratia nostra queat largirier Emolumenti, ut nostrâ quidquam causâ gerere aggredierentur?* Lucret. ex Epic.

requisitions, but his Goodness, that press'd him to Manifest, and to Impart his Glory; and the Goods which he so over-flowingly abounds with. Witness his Suspension of the World's Creation, which certainly had had an earlier Date, were the Deity capable of Want, and the Creatures of Supplying it. St. *Paul* in his Epistle to *Timothy*, styles God, Μακάριος, which we translate, *The blessed God*, but may perhaps more properly be rendred, *The happy God*: And elsewhere in the same Epistle he truly calls him *The Happy*, as well as *Only Potentate*. *God* (says the Apostle) *that made the World, and all Things therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not, &c. As though He needed any thing, seeing that He giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all Things.* And, *In Him, we live, and move, and have our Being.* And indeed, so coherent in the mind of a meer Man, that does but Consider and Understand the Import of his own Notions, is the belief of God's happiness to that of His Being; that I remember the Epicurean, *Lucretius* himself, even in that impious passage, where he denies Divine Providence; and in a seeming, but injurious Complement, would, under the pretence of Easing God of it, Deprive Him

1 Tim. 1. 11. 1 Tim. 6. 15. Act 27. 24, 25, & 26.

of the Government of the World; does yet confess, that the Divine Nature must necessarily enjoy a Supreme and endless Tranquility, adding, (to bring this to our present purpose) that 'tis

-------Privata dolore omni, privata periclis;
Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri.

Whereby he acknowledges,

That from all griefs and dangers of them freed,
Rich in it self, it has of us no need.

Or, if you will have him speak of the gods in the Plural, like a Heathen Poet, that

Far above griefs and danger, those blest Powers,
Rich in their Native Goods, need none of ours.

A much Nobler Poet tells us, That *the* Psal. 24 1. *Earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the World, and they that dwell therein.* Agreeably whereunto, that *Great God that* Prov. 26. 10. *formed all things,* (as in our Translation the Scripture calls him) says in one of the Psalms,

Psalms, *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee,* Psal. 50. 12
for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. His Ubiquity excludes all wishes of Remove, by making his Essence uncapable of Exclusion; for, Whither should he desire to transport Himself that is Every where, and can wish himself in no place where he is not already? His sufficiency is such, that he can see no Goods, but what he Gives, or Hath, (or rather both bestows and possesses) his Plenty being so unexhausted a Spring of Goods, that his Liberality does less impoverish God, than the Sun's light does him; or imparted Knowledge impairs the Teacher's Stock. And therefore, though St. *James* do very justly call God, *The Father of Lights*, who is the Jam. 1. 17.
bestower of every good and every perfect Gift; yet the *Friend of God*, (as the Scripture calls *Abraham*) and that Royal Priest, Jam. 2. 23.
(whom the Writer to the Hebrews Heb. 7. *per totum.*
teaches us to have been so Illustrious a Type of Him, whom he calls, *The high Priest of our Profession*) do both of them in Heb. 3. 1.
the same Chapter style him, *The Possessor* Gen. 14.
of Heaven and Earth. No, no, God needs 18. 22.
not beg From, or covet In the Creatures shallow streams, those goods, of which he not only Hath, but is the Source. Our greatest Services to our Creator must be

to Discharge our selves, not to Advantage him, nor as thinking to add any thing to Felicity, which were not Infinite, could admit Encrease. Our highest Performances, though they be Dues, amount not unto Tributes, but are rather like those Pepper-corns of Rent which Free-holders pay, not with hope or with intent to Enrich their Land-lord, but to Acknowledge that they hold all from him. When we admire the Sun, our Seeing of his light doth not increase it, it makes it not Greater, but onely it makes it Ours; and when we turn away, or shut our Eyes, that glorious Planet suffers no Eclipse, and is not at all darkned or impair'd, nor doth He thereby lose his light, but We: The Easiness of the application requires, and excuses its Omission. *If thou sinnest,* (says *Elihu* in *Job*) *what dost thou against him? if thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a Man, as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the Son of Man.* In effect, the wicked's spite against God is but like a mad-man's running his head against the wall, that leaves the Wall unshaken, but dashes his own Brains out. God *inhabits* a Felicity (as well as *Light*) *inaccessible* to all inferior attempts: His soveraign Tran-

Job 35. 6, 7, 8.

1 Tim. 6. 16.

quillity

quility is so sublimely plac'd, that 'tis above the reach of all Disquieting Impressions; and, like the Stars, that feel not the Diseases their inauspicious Influence produces, He doth not Resent the torments he Inflicts. God's Justice is not less Essential to him than his Mercy; Witness that (the numbers of the Saints and the Reprobate consider'd) thousands fall Sacrifices to the severer Attribute, for one that proves Capable of the milder. He said, *He would get himself honour upon Pharaoh and all his Host*, when he design'd their ruine in the *Red-Sea*: And *Moses* said, *He hath triumphed gloriously* in effecting it. And in *Ezekiel* he says, *Behold, I am against thee, O* Sidon, *and I will be glorify'd in the midst of thee, and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall have executed my judgments in her, and shall be sanctify'd in her.* Thus, when a Flash of God's Indignation (kindled by that *strange fire* they presum'd to offer before him) had blasted the two presumptuous Sons of *Aaron*, God is said *to have been sanctify'd in them that come nigh him, and to have been glorify'd before all the people*; such eminent and exemplary Instances of Severity, manifesting him to be so Holy in his Laws, and so Concern'd for them, that even the

Exod. 14. 17, 18.

Exod. 15. 1.

Ezek. 28. 22.

Levit. 10. 3.

Ministers of his Altars shall not violate them with Impunity, but find Him (what the Writer to the *Hebrews* calls him) *A consuming fire*; Who will be Glorifi'd before all his people, either by the Obedience of those that approach Him, or by their Destruction. So to Evidence, that God can derive Satisfaction as well from the Exercise of provoked Justice, as from that of his provoked Mercy; the sacred Orator uses this remarkable *Antanaclasis*,

Heb. 12. 29.

Deut. 28. 63. *And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoyced over you to do you good, and multiply you; so will the Lord rejoyce over you to destroy you, and bring you to naught.* Thus, though it be truly said of God by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, that *he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*: (and therefore the determined Consumption of the whole Land, which our Bibles English, *God's work, his strange work*, other Translators read, *Opus alienum suum*) Yet when the sins of Incorrigible offenders are grown to that provoking Heighth, that his Mercy intercedes no more to avert or suspend the inflictions of his Justice; then how much he can satisfie himself in Destroying those that Would not be Preserved, may be ghess'd at by that formidable Expression in *Ezekiel*; where, having fore-told what

Lam 3 33.

Isa. 28. 21.

havock

havock the Sword, the Famine, and the Peſtilence ſhould make amongſt the intractable and diſpers'd *Iſraelites*, he adds, (as a kind of Ἐπιφώνημα) *Thus ſhall mine anger be accompliſhed, and I will cauſe my fury to reſt upon them, and I will be comforted.* Ezek. 13. 5 The Howlings of the Damned as well ſound forth his Praiſes, as do the Hallelujahs of the Saints; they both do ſing to him an everlaſting Canticle of praiſe; onely in this great Confort of his whole Intelligent Creation, the deſignleſly conſpiring Voices are as differing as the Conditions of the reſpective Singers. Hell's darkneſs doth as well contribute to God's Glory, as Heaven's Eternal Splendor: As Shadows, judiciouſly plac'd, do no leſs praiſe the Painter, than do the livelier and brighter Colours. And as when the Earth doth ſend black, noiſome, and ſulphureous Exhalations up toward the Sky, alas, they reach not Heaven, nor diſcompoſe the Spheres; but all the Storms and Thunders they produce fall on that Globe they came from, and there do all their miſchief: So, the wicked may Wrong God indeed, yet do they really Harm but themſelves by all their greateſt ſins, which trouble Him chiefly, but becauſe they neceſſitate Him to puniſh them: for the tranſgreſſions that do

moſt

most Provoke God do him not the least Harm. An impious person may (as *Elihu* lately inform'd us) hurt a Man, as himself is, not that supremely blessed Deity; the Result of whose Infinite Perfections is a resembling Happiness, which is as inseparable from Him as his Essence. Our offences may derogate from his Accessional Glory, not from his Essential Felicity; or rather, the most desperate Sinners by their greatest Crimes, can but Change the Attribute they should bring honour to, and but oppose the glorifying of his Goodness, to occasion the glorifying of his Justice; since he will be infallibly glorifi'd, soon or late, either by Men's actions, or their sufferings; by their Practice of Duties, or Punishment for Sin. Thus you see how little God is beholden to you for your Declining Hell: Nor will the score be very much encreas'd by your Addresses and Attempts for Heaven. *Can a man* (says *Eliphaz*) *be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain unto him that thou makest thy ways perfect?* Congruously to which sence the Psalmist says, *My Goodness extendeth not to Thee*; The fire that we kindle on God's Altars heats and enlightens Us, but warms not

Job 22. 2, 3.

Psal. 16. 2.

not Heaven at so distant a remove, nor is wanted in the Sun's residence. We have all the Redolence of the Perfumes and Incense we burn upon his Altars, the Smoak doth vanish e'r it can reach the Sky, and whilst 'tis undispers't, but Clouds, and but Obscures it. Alas, our Best Performan es are as useless Services to God, as the Heir's bringing Wax to his departing Father is to him, which adds not any thing to the Rich man's store, and is by him desir'd and accepted, onely to Seal away a Fortune to his Son. Though therefore it be true, that God is Pleas'd with our Performances, yet is that Welcome he vouchsafes to give them, so far from enabling us by them to Requite his Love, that it encreases the Unrequitedness of it; Since He is delighted with them, as they afford him just Rises to reward them. How far from Mercenary is then God's Bounty! since he accepts our Acknowledgments of his former blessings, (chiefly) to make them Opportunities of conferring fresh ones; as good old *Isaac* desir'd his Son's Venison, that from the Relishing of that savoury Meat he might take an Opportunity to bless him. Gen. 27. 4.

And the better to discover how Disinteress'd God's favours are, let us further consider, how little they are Requitable; *Sect.* 15.

for

for we can give him nothing but his own, (nor, Heaven knows, all that neither); and both the Will and Power to ſerve Him are His, upon ſo juſt and many Scores, that we are unable to Retribute, unleſs we do Reſtore; and all the Duties we can pay our Maker, are leſs properly Requitals than Reſtitutions. When *David* and his Officers had offer'd towards the Structure of that Magnificent Temple, which they ſeem'd Ambitious to make a Manſion inferior to Heaven onely; the King himſelf gave three thouſand Talents of Gold, and ſeven of refin'd Silver; and the Heads of the People, five thouſand Talents (beſides ten thouſand Drachms) of Gold, ten thouſand Talents of Silver, eighteen thouſand of Braſs, and a hundred thouſand of Iron, (a Treaſure, of which I ſcarce remember to have read the like in any Hiſtory) beſides a number of all manner of Precious Stones, capable of impoveriſhing the very *Indies*: They perfum'd this noble and unequall'd Offering with a ſolemn Confeſſion, which perhaps in God's eſteem was much more precious than It: *Thine, O Lord*, (ſays the Royal Prophet in the name of all) *is the greatneſs, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majeſty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is thine.*

1 Chron. 29.11-16.

thine. Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reigneſt over all. And in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give ſtrength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praiſe thy glorious Name. But who am I? and what is my people, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are Strangers before thee, and Sojourners, as were all our Fathers. Our days on Earth are as a ſhadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this ſtore that we have prepared to build thee an Houſe, for thy holy Name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. who (ſays the Apoſtle, in a Quæſtion that imports its own Negative) *hath firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompenſed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.* Nay, even our Love it ſelf (that poor Man's Surety and Exchequer, that doth pay all his Debts, by ſupplying him with the Prerogative to Coin his Deſires and Wiſhes of an Arbitrary value) is here unable to diſcharge our Debts: our Love being too much the Effect, to be capable of being the Recompence of God's. And ſurely, the Divine Amoriſt

Rom. 11. 35, 36.

1 Joh. 4. 10. Amoriſt had cauſe to ſay, that *herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.* And, as the ſame Apoſtle elſewhere

1 Joh. 4. 19. ſpeaks, *we love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.* If, in effect, we look upon the unworthy Conteſt, betwixt God's Mercies, and moſt Men's Ingratitude, and but reflect upon the ſmall Return of Love that the greateſt Diſburſements of His do uſually bring home; we cannot but acknowledge, (as *David* in the lately mention'd Scripture did) that our Loving God for his Favours, is one of the greateſt Favours that we love him for. So Unrequitable is God's Love, and ſo Inſolvent are We, that that Love vaſtly improves the Benefit, by which alone we might have pretended to ſome ability of Retribution. And ſo unlimited is this Impotence of ours to recompence or repay God's Dilection, that it extends to, and fetters our very Wiſhes. For God enjoys an Affluence of Felicity, ſo perfect and entire, that even our Wiſhes can aim at nothing for him Worthy of him, unleſs inſtructed by what he already actually poſſeſſes. And the Senſe of this ſame very Impotence, to ſome of the greateſt Proficients in *Seraphick Love*, appears not the leaſt uneaſie Property of it. It grieves us ſenſibly, to ſee our ſelves reduc'd to be onely

onely Passive, and the Receivers in this Commerce. We would fain contribute something, and cannot always refrain from devoting our Wishes to encrease his Happiness, to whom we owe all ours. And some holy Persons (particularly St. *Austin*) have by the Exuberance of their Gratitude and Devotion, been transported to make Wishes, and use Expressions, wherein their Affections had a greater share than their Reason, and which argued them much better to apprehend, How much God deserv'd of them, than How little he needed them. But, upon second Thoughts, we shall find, that the Cause of our Grief ought to turn it into our Joy, since the Desires we would frame, aiming at God's being infinitely happy, are all Fulfilled before they are Conceived, and that in the most Advantagious and Noblest way: For, could God's happiness admit Accession by our accomplish'd Wishes, there were then a possibility of his Wanting something to render it Compleat. And sure, 'tis a more Supreme felicity to be by Nature transcendently above All encrease of Blessedness, than to receive the Greatest that Men can Wish.

To proceed now to the Constancy of God's Love: We cannot enterrain of God *Sect.* 16.

any

any Apprehenſions, not altogether Unworthy of him, and criminally Injurious to him, without believing, That to think that he Can be Inconſtant, is as great a Crime as twere a Miſery to find him ſo. His Love is like his Eſſence, immutably Eternal, reaching from Everlaſting to Everlaſting, it preceded the Nativity of Time, and will ſurvive its utmoſt Period and Obſequies. Joh. 13.1. *Having loved his own which were in the World, he loved them unto the end*, ſays the Evangeliſt: And when Jam 1.17. St. *James* had told us, That *every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights*, he adds, (to complete our Conſolation) *with whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us of the word of truth.* And, in effect, ſince God takes the Motives of his Love to Us, from Himſelf, not from Us, the Unchangeableneſs of his Nature ſeems ſtrongly to infer that of his Charity, and our Happineſs in it. For, Mal. 3.6. *I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not conſumed*, ſays God by the laſt of his Prophets: And in *Jeremiah* he tells his people, *I have lov'd thee with an everlaſting love.* And what God once ſaid Joſh. 1.5. to the generous *Joſhua*, *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee*, is by the Writer to the

the *Hebrews* appli'd to Believers in general? for *the gifts and calling of God* (says the same Author elsewhere) *are without repentance*. Nor do those Crosses that seem due to his Anger destroy the Immutability of his Love, since even that Anger is an Effect of it, proceeding from a Fatherly Impatience of seeing a Spot unwip'd off in the Face he loves too well to see a Blemish in it; and from his Desire to see his Child an Object fit for a larger Measure of his Kindness: As when we beat the Dust out of a Suit we fancy, we strike not out of Anger, but onely to remove that which doth Sully it, and hinder us to take that Delight in it, which our fondness would be pleased with a just Cause to find. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*, (says our Saviour.) And, *I know, O Lord*, (says the Psalmist) *that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.* The Furnace of Affliction being meant but to Refine us from our Earthly drossiness, and Soften us for the Impression of God's own Stamp and Image. The great and merciful Architect of his Church, (whom not onely the Philosophers have styl'd, but the Scripture it self calls τεχνίτης, an Artist or Artificer) employs not on us the Hammer and the

Heb. 13.5. Rom. 11. 29. Rev. 3.19. Psal. 119. 75. Heb. 11. 10.

Chizzel, with an intent to Wound or Mangle us, but only to Square and Fashion our hard and stubborn Hearts into such
1 Pet. 2. 5. *living Stones*, as may both Grace and Strengthen his heavenly Structure. Nor is God onely thus Constant to his Love, but to his Lovelineſs. Our Female Beauties are usually as fickle in their Faces as their Minds, and more certainly in the former; because, though Casualties should spare them, Age brings in a Necessity of a Change, nay, a Decay; leaving our Doters upon Red and White incessantly perplex'd, by the incertainty both of the Continuance of their Mistress's Kindness, and of the Lasting of her Beauty, (both which are necessary to the *Amorist*'s Joys and Quiet): for, sometimes, when the Mistress's humour doth not change so Much, as to prove guilty of the fault of Inconstancy, her Face alters Enough to make her Lovers wish Inconstancy no Fault; or, that she had committed it, that her Fickleness might afford them the Excuse of Imitation or Revenge. But, in Devotion, we are equally secure from both these Dangers. Since God doth not desist from blessing us with His Love, nor ceases ever from deserving the Heighth of Ours. Nor is he onely constant in making us the Objects

jects of his Love, but also in bending and enclining us to make him the Object of our strongest Affections; so that he not onely persists in continuing to us both the Offer and the Value of his Love, but perseveres to give us a receptive Disposition to Welcome it to us, and reflect it up to Him. The want of such a Disposition lost *Adam* Paradise, and the Fall'n Angels Heaven; there being to the Object that must secure our Love such a Nature requisite in reference to our Affections, as Philosophers are pleas'd to ascribe to the world's Centre in relation to Heavy Bodies, which, they teach us, that Magnetick Point has the double Faculty, not onely to Draw thither, but to Keep there. For so Untoward and Cross-grain'd are We, in point of our own Good, and so unfit to Procure, and ready to Desert, our own Felicity, that neither its Excellency is a sufficient Motive to carry our addresses to it, nor its Possession a competent Tye to intercept in us all designs of Revolts and Divorces: But we must be used as peevish Children are, who, (on the one side) when their Mouths are out of taste, and they refuse to take what is necessary for them, must have it not onely Offer'd them, but Forc'd upon them, and be (as it were)

Made to receive it; and who (on the other side) must be restrain'd from Gadding, when the Beauty of the Mansions they live in cannot invite their Stay; but they would gladly leave the proudest Palaces Architecture can boast, to Run into the Street, and Dabble in the Kennel. All these three Properties of Divine Constancy are not ill Shadow'd in the operations of the Load-stone, (a Mineral, in which I have made too many Experiments, not to be by you allow'd to make some Comparisons to it.) For, first, it never forsakes its Inclinations for the Steel: next, being united to it, it retains so constantly its Attractive Qualities, that it gives not the Needle any Motive of deserting it; and thirdly, it doth never rightly touch the amorous Steel, without leaving an Impression, which ever after disposes it to a Conversion to that Magnetick Posture, which best fits it to receive fresh Influences. To which, let me add this other Resemblance, betwixt God's work on Us, and the Load-stone's on the Iron, that the Kind Stone attracts a Needle to it, not to Advantage it self by that Union, but to Impart its Virtue to what it draws. Besides, Absence and Rivals, those frequent Ruiners of other Lovers happiness, can threaten

threaten nothing of Formidable to Yours. For, Abſence (which ſo divorces us from that which animates us, that Lovers do not ſo improperly ſtyle it Death, if Death be but the Separation of Soul and Body) by God's Ubiquity we are ſecured from; He is ever preſent With Us, or rather In Us. You that not long ſince ſo highly valu'd the Opportunities of Converſing with your Miſtreſs for ſome few Moments, ſhall here find your Privileges improv'd to a Permiſſion, nay, an Invitation, of entertaining the Object of your Love at all times. No hour renders your viſits Unſeaſonable, nor no length Tedious: He is rather welcomeſt to God that comes to him Oftneſt, and ſtays with him Longeſt. What favours were vouchſaf'd to that antient Propheteſs, (who was likewiſe one of the firſt Evangeliſts) who for many years *departed not from the Temple, but ſerved God with Faſtings and Prayers Night and Day*, the beginning of St. *Luke*'s Goſpel may inform you. The *midnight Hymns* of *Paul* and *Silas* did not onely not Diſturb or Offend him they prais'd, but procur'd the viſit of an Angel to bring them miraculous and unexpected Liberty, as a proof of the Acceptableneſs of their ſeemingly unſeaſonable Devotions. When

Luk. 2. 37, &c.

Act. 6. 25, 26, &c.

Gen. 5. 22, 23, 24. *Enoch had walked with God* as many years as the year has days, God was so far from being Importun'd or Tir'd by that lasting Assiduity, that vouchsafing him an unexampled Exemption from Death, he was pleas'd by a new and a nearer Cut to Heaven, to admit him to a yet Closer, more Immediate, and more Undistracted Communion with himself. And when *Moses* Exod. 34. 30. had spent no less than *forty days and forty nights* in Conversing (if I may use so Familiar a tearm) with God in the Mount, he brought down thence, instead of a Penance for his Importunity, so signal and radiant a Testimony of God's peculiar Favour, that his dazled Country-men were as much Disabled, as Invited, to gaze on an Object of so much Wonder. And then, How proud do we see many Lovers of their Sufferings, when she but Knows of them for whom they are endured? But in *Seraphick Love*, there is not the least good Wish, or privatest Suffering, nay, not a whispering Sigh, or closer Thought, that silently Groans or Aspires in the Amorous Soul, but He both sees and hears, Psal. 56. 8. that Puts his Servants *tears into his Bottle*, Sweetning and Recompencing the greatest Misfortunes that his Love occasions, with such Support and Joys, as hinder us to feel them,

them, and make them deserve a contrary name. Each amorous Soul may say to God with *David*, *Thou knowest my down-sitting, and my up-rising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off, thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.* Psal. 139. 2, 3. And Christ also himself has so attentive an Eye upon the amorous Soul, that he is held forth in the *Apocalypse*, as telling the Ruler of the Church of *Smyrna, I know thy works, & tribulation, & poverty*; Rev. 2. 8, 9. And saying to the Angel of the Church of *Pergamus, I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is, and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful Martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.* ver. 12, 13. So that no endearing Circumstance of our Love scapes unobserv'd by Him, who has Done and Suffer'd so much to engage us to it. God remembers not our Endeavours to serve Him, the less, for Our having forgotten them. *When saw we thee any way distressed, and relieved thee?* Matth. 25. 37, &c. will be the Question of those to whom Heaven it self will be at the last Day awarded, as having Ministred to their Redeemer. Those, that in Degenerate times, such as ours, *Lindamor*, did, like *Lot* in *Sodom*, mourn for

Their Sins, that mourned not for their Own, and condol'd among themselves the spreading Wickedness of the times they liv'd in; though probably the Dangers threatned them by the very Sinfulness they deplor'd, made them affect such Privacies in their Conferences, as freed them from the Thoughts of being Over-heard; yet the Scripture informs us, (and 'tis a Comfortable as well as Memorable Passage) that *the Lord hearkned, and heard it, and a Book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name. Then shall he return, and discern betwixt the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.* *I know,* says Christ, (not onely to the Angel of *Smyrna*, but to each true Sufferer for Him) *thy works, and tribulation, and poverty: Fear none of these things that thou shalt suffer. Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* God is often pleas'd to accept those good Thoughts and Intentions of his Servants, which never arrive at actual Performances. Though *David* built not the Temple he design'd, yet his Son, that did it, informs us, that God said unto him, *Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an House for my Name, Thou didst well in that*

Mal. 3. 16, 17.

Rev. 2. 9, 10.

2 Chron. 6. 8.

it

it was in thine heart, &c. And 'tis the Epithet our Saviour gives God, *Your Father which seeth in secret, &c.* Nor need we fear our Rivals should Supplant us, since we can have none in Devotion, whose Prayer and Endeavour it is not, that God would love us more. For his Love to You being (as the chiefest Merit) the strongest Motive and Title unto theirs, they cannot but Wish him well whom God doth love so; and cannot Wish him better, than by imploring for him fresh Additions, both of that Love of God, and grateful Dispositions to return it. Our Saviour assures us, that *there is Joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth.* And the sole Hymn (except a Visionary one) I find recorded of the Celestial Quire, was sung for a Blessing to Mankind, wherein (for ought I know) their Love and Sympathy alone concern'd them: *For unto us* (Men) *the Child is born, and unto us the Son is given. Who took not upon him the nature of Angels, but the seed of Abraham.* So Noble and so Disinteress'd doth Divine Love make Ours, that there is nothing, besides the Object of that Love, that we love more than our Concurrents in it, perchance out of a Gratitude to their assisting us, to pay a Debt (of Love and Praise)

Mat. 6. 6.

Luk. 15. 7, 10.

Luk. 2. 13, 14.

Isa. 9. 6.

Heb. 2. 16.

for

for which (alas!) we find our single selves but too Insolvent.

Sect. 17. Perhaps I need not mind you, *Lindamor*, that divers Passages of the fore-going Discourse, suppose the Truth of their Doctrine, who ascribe to God, in relation to every Man, an Eternal unchangeable and Inconditionate Decree of Election, or Reprobation. Yet concerning the Controversies betwixt the *Calvinists* and the *Remonstrants*, about Prædestination, and the coherent Doctrines, it were Improper to give you here my sence. Those that are truly Pious of either Party, are perhaps otherwise look'd on by God than by one another, as Contending, which of God's Attributes should be most Respected; the one seeming to Affirm irrespective Decrees, to magnifie his Goodness; and the other to Deny them but to Secure the credit of his Justice. And even in Honouring the same Attribute, his Goodness, these Adversaries seem Rivals, the one party supposing it best Celebrated by believing it so Irresistable, that to whom soever 'tis intended, he Cannot but be happy; and th' other thinking it most Extoll'd by being believ'd so Universal, that it will make Every man happy, if he pleases: The one Party electing to Honour Free-grace, by

assigning

assigning it (as to Men) an unlimitedly-vast Extent; as the other does, by ascribing it an infallibly-victorious Degree. But though my haste, and the nature of my Theme make me decline the Controversies about Prædestination; yet since the Doctrine that maintains it, is not only by almost all the rest of Mankind, but by the rest of the Protestant Churches themselves, (the *Lutherans*, and divers learn'd Divines of the Church of *England*) not only Rejected, but Detested as little less than Blasphemous, (as indeed they that judge it an Error, cannot but be tempted to think it a Dangerous one, and of very pernicious Consequence, so far forth as its Sequels are permitted to have Influence on Men's Practice) I think it not amiss to Advertise you, that the Doctrine of Prædestination is not necessary to Justifie the Freeness and the Greatness of God's Love. For so conspicuous and Refulgent a Truth is that of God's being the Author of Man's Felicity, that the Dispute betwixt the *Calvinists* and *Arminians* is not so much concerning the Thing, as concerning the Manner of its being Proffer'd; the former affirming Grace to be Irresistably presented; the later, though they deny it to be Irrejectable, yet granting, not only that it is

altogether

altogether Free and Undeserv'd, but also, that the Proffer is made both with a Power enabling those to whom 'tis render'd, to Accept it, and with such engaging Invitations, that Man at his first Conversion need contribute nothing to his Felicity, but the not-wilfully Refusing it, and may more properly be said to owe it unto God, than the Beggar to owe his Alms to his Reliever, though he open his hand to receive it, which he might have declin'd to do, if he would have wilfully courted his own Prejudice. Christ paid *a Ransome to Redeem us*, 'tis true, and he is therefore call'd,
2 Pet. 2.1. *The Lord that bought us*: But it was God's free Goodness, both to provide us That Christ, and to accept of That Ransome, neither of which he was Oblig'd to do; and therefore, the Scripture ascribes it not to the Justice, but to the Love of God to
Joh. 3.16. the world, that *He sent his only begotten Son to Redeem it*: And St. *Paul* in the same Text
Rom. 3.24. tells us both, that *We are Justifi'd*, δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι, *freely by his Grace*, and yet that it is, διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως, *through the Redemption*, (purchas'd for a Ransome; the Original word English'd Redemption, relating to the Price paid for the Redeeming of Captives) *that is in Jesus Christ*. 'Tis confest on all hands, that Merit must

be

be disclam'd, and those that seem to expect something from God as a Due, acknowledge, that if his Promise did not, their Actions could not, make it so; and that 'tis to his Mercy they owe the Right they have to confide in his Justice. St. *Paul*, who, having *fought the good Fight, finish'd his Course, and kept the Faith*, expected *a Crown of Righteousness from the Lord*, under the Notion of the Righteous *Judge*; yet tells us, that *by Grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of our selves, it is the gift of God.* Whose Promises, now they Are made us, allow us indeed to expect Heaven from his Justice; but *the making us those great and precious promises*, (as St. *Peter* justly styles them) must be acknowledg'd the pure Effect of *his free and undeserved Goodness*; which to believe Infinite, we need but consider the Disproportion betwixt such a Recompence as Eternal Glory, and the least Imperfect Performances of ours: Which, though they Needed not Pardon, could not at least Challenge any Reward from Him, who, as our Creator, has such a Right to exact of us what services he Pleases, without proposing us any Recompence, that our exactest obedience to all his Commands, would yet leave us to confess our selves

2 Tim. 4. vers. 7, 8.

Eph. 2. 8.

2 Pet. 1. 4.

unprofitable

Luk. 17. 10. *unprofitable Servants*, who *have done but what it was our Duty to do*; and what if we had not done, we had given God, who had the Power, the Right and Provocation to punish us. And indeed, so conscious are men Generally (if not Naturally) to their being beholding to God for their Felicity, that even those that mistake or oppose his Way of doing them good, will yet be sure to find out some Notion or other, under which they may conceive themselves God's Debtors for his Blessings. That the more sober sort of Romish Catholicks themselves, ascribe not so much to Merit, (properly so call'd) nor so little to God's Grace, as the more Quarrelsome Writers of their party have given the more Eager Disputants of ours occasion to reproach them; were perhaps no difficult task to manifest, if my haste would give me leave. That the *Arminians* own the Freeness and Unmeritedness of God's grace, the Remonstrants * Confession and Apology are very careful to satisfie the World. And even the *Socinians*, (how prosperously I determine not) are not a little, or un-industriously sollicitous to free their Erroneous Doctrine of Justification from the objected guilt of its tendency to draw the Imbracers of it to *Sacrifice to their*

* *Especially* Chap. 17. Numb 5,6

their own Nets, and thank themſelves for their Felicity. Which brings into my mind a paſſage that I lately read in one of the chief modern Upholders of that Sect, *Schlichtingius*; who is wont in my Opinion, where his Subject will bear it, to diſcourſe as Fairly and as Rationally as almoſt any Writer that I have met with of his Perſuaſion; and who labours to reconcile *Socinus* his Doctrine with the Freeneſs of God's Grace, by Conſiderations, which, not to Injure him, I ſhall preſent you with in his own words.------- *Ad retundendam vero* (ſays he, diſputing againſt the Learned *Meiſnerus*) *arrogantiam juſtificatorum, & ne dicant ſe meruiſſe Gratiam, non eſt neceſſe, ſervum in homine arbitrium inducere; non debet virtus tolli ut tollatur arrogantia. Sufficit, 1. Quod nec velle nec perficere poſſint, niſi Deus & voluntatem excitet & vires augeat. 2. Quod ea, quæ divinis adjuti viribus faciunt, nullo modo dignitate & pretio divinæ gratiæ reſpondeat, ſed infinito intervallo ab ea abſint.* Nay, though the Modern and Degenerate Jews be, upon the Score of being the great Patrons of Man's Free-will, not cauſleſly eſteem'd the great Oppugners of God's Free grace; yet both from their Famous Rabbi, and my Learned Acquaintance, *Menaſſeh Ben Iſrael*,

Hab. 1. 26.

pag. 97.

Israel, and from divers others of their most eminent Writers, has the truth sometimes extorted Confessions, which, though made upon Erroneous grounds, were not very far short of Orthodox. To which purpose I remember, that a Jewish Professor of Hebrew, (who assisted me in my Studies of that mysterious Tongue) being, as the rest of his Nation, an eager and peremptory Champion of Free-will, conceiv'd, that even that Liberty, which to us seems least to Indebt men to their Creator, did transcendently Oblige him unto God. For, one Day that we were privately and freely discoursing together of matters of Religion, he told me, he thought Men ow'd more to God's Goodness, than the very Angels do. For, said he, whereas God, without any good Work of theirs, but purely out of his Goodness, confer'd on them that blest Condition they enjoy; by giving Man a Free-will, by the good Use of which he may Glorifie his Maker; when, by Abusing it, 'tis in his power to Dishonour him, he allows Man that highest Satisfaction and Privilege, of Co-operating to his own Felicity.

Sect. 18. And now, *Lindamor*, we are arrived at the last Property, which qualifies God, the fittest Object for our Love, which is,

the

the *Advantagiousness* of His to us both in the Present and the Future Life. And first, even in This World we owe God no less than All the Goods we possess. We owe him both What we have, and That we are: For we may truly say of God with the Psalmist, *It is he that hath made us, and not we our selves.* And we were not only in his hands, so like *Clay in the Potter's*, that he might have made us Any thing; but we were so purely that Negative, from whence we were extracted, that He (if he had pleased) for ever might have left us to our first Nothing. His Love is the Original and Fountain-blessing; all the rest are but as Pipes (and Instruments) to Convey it, and serve but to hand it to us. Your Wit wins you Applause, Your Industry heaps you up Treasures; be it granted. But who gave you that Wit? and did both Give and Prosper that boasted Industry? Certainly, God as much Gives us all the Goods we Possess, as he that gives a Beggar a thousand Pounds, gives him the Cloaths, and Meat, and all the Bravery it helps him to. But besides these more obvious Presents of God's Bounty, we enjoy other Effects of his Goodness, which, though by the Customarines of their being possessed, they prove less Con-

Psal. 110. vers. 3.

Isa. 64. 8.

ſpicuous than the other, yet grow no leſs Priz'd, when the Want or Loſs of them makes us ſenſible of the true Value of them. Had I the leiſure, *Lindamor*, to lead your Thoughts with me to the Galleys, and ſhew you there thoſe wretched Captives, that are Chain'd to the Oars they tugg at, and though expos'd to all the Miſeries and Hardſhips of a tempeſtuous Sea, have oftentimes cauſe given them, by their Barbarous Uſage aſhore, to fear the Ocean leſs than any Port ſave Death. Could I draw for you the Curtains of Sick and Dying-men, and open to you that ſad Scene, where ſome pine and languiſh away by Diſtempers, that deprive them of all the Joys, Advantages, and (what is more conſiderable) Uſes of Life, before they eaſe them of Life it ſelf; Others Breathe rather than Live, perpetually Tormented either with their Diſeaſes or Phyſick to protract a wretched Life, upon tearms that turn it into a Trouble: And Others ſtruggling with the rude Pangs of Death, are yet perchance leſs tormented by Them, than by the ſad Proſpect of their Former Life, and the Remembrance of thoſe Criminal pleaſures, *which yet it perhaps leſs troubles them that they muſt now forego, than that they once enjoy'd them.*

Should

Should I, *Lindamor*, bring you into Hoſpitals, and ſhew you there the various ſhapes of Human Miſery, and how many Souls, narrowly lodg'd (if I may ſo ſpeak) in Synecdochical bodies, ſee their earthen Cottages moulder away to Duſt; thoſe miſerable Perſons by the loſs of one Limb after another, ſurviving but Part of Themſelves, and living to ſee themſelves Dead and Buried by piece-meal. Should I, to diſpatch, *Lindamor*, ſhew you all the ſeveral Companies of Mourners, that almoſt make up Mankind, and diſcloſe to you how copious ſhowrs of Tears do almoſt every where Water (not to ſay Over-flow) this Vale of Miſeries; You would perchance ſee cauſe to think, that God's Privative (if I may ſo ſpeak) may contend with his Poſitive Favours; and that you owe little leſs for what you are Not, than for what you Are, to that diſcriminating Mercy of his, to which alone you owe your Exemption from miſeries, as great as the Bleſſing it confers on you: For, *Who maketh thee to differ?* is a Queſtion that may be as well ask'd in reference to our External, as to our Spiritual Condition. Which invites me to mind you, *Lindamor*, that you are yet more engag'd to God's Love, for Protecting you from thoſe groſs Vices that Diſfigure moſt Men's minds, than from thoſe leſs Dan-

1 Cor. 4. 7.

Dangerous, though more Resented, Diseases that Distemper their Bodies.

For, Ambition, Lust, Avarice, Revenge, and even that *vain Conversation* which young Gentlemen are generally pleas'd to think so Innocent, are really more Formidable and pernicious Diseases and Calamities, than those that reduce Men to take Physick, or thrust them into Hospitals. To evince the truth of which Paradox, I hope I shall not need to mind you of judging of the Dangerousness of Diseases by the Nobleness of the part affected, since I can tell you, that He that cannot err, seems daily to justifie our Assertion, by inflicting Sickness and the sharpest outward Calamities on his own Dearest Children, to preserve them from the Contagion of Sin, or Cure them of the unfilial Habitudes of it. And therefore, since, when we see a tender Mother apply a painful Caustick to the neck of her Favorite-Infant, threatned by the Apoplexie, we scruple not to conclude, that she thinks the trouble of an Issue an Evil inferior to Convulsion-fits: So when we see our Heavenly Father send Infirmities and Crosses to rescue those he Loves from the Contagion or the Dominion of Sin; we may safely conclude, he thinks Affliction a less Evil than Guilt, since he is too Wise and Indulgent a

1 Pet. 1 18.

Physician

Physician to Cure with a Remedy worse than the Disease. In the eighth of *Deuteronomy*, there is a Caution given the *Israelites*, lest Prosperity (which is wont to be a kind of Lethe, that makes men Forget all, but their Enjoyments) should make any of them say in his heart, *My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this Wealth.* But (saith the Text) *they shall remember the Lord their God: for it is he that giveth them power to get Wealth.* It is not the revolting *Israelites* only, of whose Ignorance of his Bounty God may complain, as he did by the Prophet, by whom he said, *I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their arms, but they knew not that I healed them*: And there are but too many, of whom he might say, as he did by the same Prophet; *For she did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multipli'd her Silver, and her Gold, which they prepar'd for Baal: Therefore will I return and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the Season thereof, and will recover my Wool and my Flax given to cover her Nakedness.* And this will make way for the Design I had to recommend the Advantagiousness of God's Love, by saying, That as for Spiritual Goods, he gives us in this Life so rich an Earnest of expected Joys, that even the Earnest is a Stock large enough to subsist with

Deut. 8. 17, 18.

Hos. 11. 3.

Hos. 1. 8, 9.

Comfort on, and really out-values and transcends all those Momentany Pleasures, it requires us to forsake, to keep up a Title to Eternal ones. But to particularize God's mercies to us in this very life, would certainly take up a Considerable part of it. And yet the Love, God bears us, Dies not with us, nor doth (as Men's Affections) either endure a Funeral in our Tombs, or survive only in an useless Grief, (or an Esteem as bootless.) No, God's love is so far from resembling the usual sort of Friends, who, when they have accompanied us to the Grave, do There leave us; that, like the Angels, that *carried* Luke 16. 22. *Lazarus's Soul to Abraham's bosom*, its Officiousness begins then most to Appear, when our dark Eyes are Clos'd, and is then Truest to the beloved Soul, when she Forsakes the Body; giving each blessed Saint cause to say of God, what *Naomi* did of *Boaz*, that *He* Ruth 2. 20. *hath not left off his kindness to the Living, and to the Dead.* *Now*, indeed (says our Saviour's Favorite) *are we the Sons of God, and it* 1 John 3. 1. *doth not yet appear what we shall be: But we know, when he shall appear, we shall be like him.* This blest Expectance must be now my Theme, because the narrow Limits, which my Design hath plac'd to this Discourse, (of the Advantages accruing from God's Love) will leave no more room untaken up by Heaven.

But

But, *Lindamor*, before I proceed to set forth to you the Greatneſs of the Felicity reſerv'd for us in Heaven, it will, I fear, be requiſite to mind you of the Lawfulneſs of having an Eye on it. For many not undeſervedly applauded Preachers, have of late been pleas'd to teach the People, that to Hope for Heaven is a Mercenary, Legal, and therefore Unfilial Affection. Indeed, to Hope for Heaven as Wages for Work perform'd, or by way of Merit, in the proper and ſtrict Acception of that tearm, were a Preſumption, to which, none of the Divines, we diſſent from, can be too much an Enemy, nor perhaps more ſo, than I am. But to take in God's Bleſſings among the Motives of Loving God, is, but to do as he did, who ſaid, *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice, and my ſupplications*; and to Look upon the Joys of Heaven, to Comfort and Support us in the Hardſhips and Loſſes to be undergon in our Journey thitherward, is, to Imitate no worſe a Man than *Moſes*, of whom it is ſaid, that *he eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the Treaſures in Ægypt; for he had reſpect*, or turn'd his Eye, (ἀπέβλεπε) *unto the recompence of the reward.* It is indeed, *Lindamor*, a happy Frame of mind, to be able to love God purely for

Sect. 19.

Pſ. 116. 1.

Heb. 11. 26.

Himself, without any Glance at our own Advantages. But though I dare not deny, that it is Possible to attain to so High and disinteress'd a kind of Love, yet I think, that that Excellency, suppos'd to be Vouchsaf'd to some Men, is not by the Scripture Exacted as a Duty from All men. Were all the recompence of Piety of a Worldly Nature, and to be Here receiv'd, the Actions invited to, by the Intuition of it, might pass for Mercenary. But when Heaven is chiefly hoped for, as it will admit us unto the fruition of God himself in Christ, and that the Other Joys expected there are so far from being of a Sensual or Worldly nature, that they are known not to be attainable, till by Death, the Senses and Bodies themselves, and all the meerly Animal Faculties be abolish'd: for a Heaven so consider'd, I say, to Forgo readily all the Pleasures of the Senses, and Undergo cheerfully all the Hardships and Dangers that are wont to attend a Holy Life, is, *Lindamor*, such a kind of Mercenariness, as none, but a Resigned, Noble, and Believing Soul, is likely to be guilty of. If I should say, that Fear it self, and even the Fear of Hell, may be one Justifiable Motive of Men's Actions, though I should propose, what those I am reasoning with would think a Paradox; yet I should perhaps hold forth

therein

therein no more than the Scripture does, *Let us therefore Fear* (says the Writer to the Hebrews) *lest a promise being left us of entring into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.* And no less eminent a Herald of the Gospel than St. *Paul*, who so successfully maintain'd the Evangelical against the Legal Spirit, thus professeth of himself, *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preach'd to others, I my self should be a cast-away.* And 'twas not to Slaves or Hirelings, that Christ directs this Admonition, *I say unto you*, my Friends, *Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forwarn you whom you shall fear, Fear him, which after he hath kill'd, hath power to cast into Hell*; *Yea, I say unto you*, (a gemination, which the present Controversie shews not to have been Causeless) *Fear him.* Where the Paraphrase given of God, is not barely Descriptive but Ratiocinative, (to borrow those tearms of the Schools) informing us, not only Whom we should, and should not fear, but Why we should fear the one and not the other. As when St. *Paul* says, *I know whom I have trusted*, he means what manner of Person, *how Faithful*, (as St. *Peter* elsewhere calls God) *and how Omnipotent*: whence immediately he adds, *And I am perswaded, that he*

Heb. 4. 1.

1 Cor. 9. 27.

Luk. 12. 4, 5.

1 Pet. 4. 19.

2 Tim. 1. 12.

he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. More Texts of the same Import might be added, if the Design of those already alleg'd were other, than to Facilitate the Admission of the more Plausible truth we have been making out, and which to us seems very clearly held forth in those and the like Scriptures, which are therefore cited out of the New Testament, that they might have the greater Authority with one sort of our Antagonists.

Phil. 3. 14. *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Rev. 22. 14. *Blessed are they that do his Commandemtnts, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City.*

1 Tim. 6. 19. *Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal Life.*

Rom 2. 17. *To them, who by patient continuing in well-doing, seek for (ζητοῦσι) Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, Eternal life.* And of Christ himself, whose Love to God is questionless Filial and Unequalable, 'tis said,

Heb. 12. 2. *Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the Joy that was set before him endured the Cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.* Nor see I why it should be Unfilial for a Child of God to further the Raising of those Passions, which his heavenly Father

Father intends to have rais'd in him, upon the ſame Grounds and Motives that God is pleaſed to imploy to Excite them. And ſince the Scripture ſeems plainly to invite our Hopes, by recording St. *Paul's* having ſaid, *Every man that ſtriveth for the maſtery is temperate in all things; now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible*: And by repreſenting our Saviour himſelf, as ſaying in one place, *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven*: In another, *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* And in divers others ſpeaking to the like purpoſe; Since, I ſay, the Scripture ſeems thus to allure our Hopes, would it not be a kind of accuſing it of an Aptneſs to delude and enſnare us, To teach, that it propoſeth to us the powerfulleſt Objects to Incite our Paſſions, if it be ſinful to cheriſh and harbour the Paſſions naturally belonging to thoſe Objects? And certainly, *Lindamor*, ſince God, who, as our Creator, knows the Frame and Conſtitution of Man's Soul, incomparably better than he himſelf, is pleas'd to deal with our Hopes and our Fears, to engage us to his Service: It very ill becomes Us, either to quarrel with his Methods of working on our Spirits, or to reject any

1 Cor. 9. 25.

Mat. 5. 12.

Rev. 2. 10.

Help

Help which he has been pleas'd to afford a Piety, which, for ought ever I could observe, does even in the best Men find resistance enough to keep any Help that can be employed to promote it from being Superstitious. And truly, the Animating or Discouraging Influence, that Hope, or the Want of it, is wont to have upon our Endeavours, makes me very apprehensive, that since the Enlivening hopes of Heaven are not able to make most Men's Endeavours other than very Languid, the forbidding those supporting Hopes would soon Weaken and Decrease our Endeavours into none at all.

Sect. 20. But, *Lindamor*, though I may perhaps have taken some Pains in studying Controversal Divinity, yet I take so little pleasure in Writing of it, that though not onely a Seasonable Duty to truth, but a Necessary one to the ensuing part of this Discourse, have prest me to serve in this cause; yet I shall perhaps obtain Your pardon, sooner than my Own, for having thus long suspended the Discoursing to you of the *Advantagiousness* of God's love to us, as it gives us Here a Right, and will Hereafter give us Admission, to Heaven. Heaven, the bright Seat of so much Happiness, that we shall scarcely count amongst

amongſt our Joys, that Heaven is the Seat of them. There the Excellency of the poſſeſſed Goods ſhall as much diſappoint our Expectations, as in other fruitions the Emptineſs is wont to do. The Apoſtle tells us, that *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of Man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.* Such pure refin'd Delights not onely ſtoop not unto Senſe, but are ſublime enough even to tranſcend Imagination. When Fancy hath form'd and ſhap'd the Perfecteſt Idæas, that its Abſtractions can make, of Bleſſedneſs; our own more happy Experiences of greater, muſt diſabuſe us, when we come to Heaven; which is a Soyl, whoſe Fruitfulneſs is ſo confin'd to Joy, that even our Diſappointments and Miſtakes ſhall there contribute to our Happineſs; which will ſo much partake of his Immenſity, whoſe Gift it is, that you ſee the Apoſtle gives it a Negative Deſcription: And to create in us Apprehenſions underogatory from what we ſhall Poſſeſs, not onely removes our thoughts From all we Do Enjoy, but Exalts them Above all that we Can Fancy. At which way of proceeding, that you may the leſs wonder, *Lindamor*, be pleas'd to conſider, that in

1 Cor. 2. 9.

in Heaven our Faculties shall not onely be Gratifi'd with suitable and acceptable Objects, but shall be Heightned and Enlarg'd, and consequently our Capacities of Happiness, as well Encreas'd as Fill'd. A Child not yet releas'd out of the homely Prison of the Womb, cannot there possibly frame Ideas of those delights, which will be afforded him by the pleasing Noises, and the glittering Objects, that will present themselves to him after his Birth. And the same Child, whilst he continues in his Nonage, though he may with Delights look upon Emblems finely Drawn and Painted, and may take some pleasure in beholding the neat and surprizing Characters and Flourishes of a Greek and Hebrew Bible curiously Printed; yet he cannot then Imagine the Pleasure the same Objects will afford him, when Age and Study shall have ripen'd and instructed his Intellectuals, and made him capable both of Understanding, and Relishing the excellent Moralities, couch'd in those ingenious Emblems, and the profound and saving Mysteries, wherewith that Divine Book, the Scripture, (especially in its Original Tongues) does to an Intelligent and Religious Peruser, appear Replenish'd. Such a double advantage, *Lindamor*, among others,

others, the Admiſſion into Heaven brings thoſe, to whom that Bleſſing is vouchſaf'd: For, beſides that Set of Objects, (if I may ſo ſpeak) ſo New, and ſo Peculiar to Heaven, that their Ideas could never enter into Men's thoughts before their Admiſſion there; beſides this, I ſay, our then enlarg'd Capacities will enable us, even in Objects which were not altogether Unknown to us before, to perceive things formerly Undiſcern'd, and derive thence both New and Greater Satisfactions and Delights. Wonder not, *Lindamor*, that in mentioning the Joys of Heaven, I uſe the Expreſſions I find leaſt Detractory from a Theme, as much above our Praiſes, as the Heaven they are enjoy'd in is above our Heads. For, though ſuch Expreſſions may ſeem ſomewhat Tumid and Aſpiring, and fitter much for one that Celebrates, than for one that but Aſſerts: Yet cannot I ſcruple to uſe Seeming Hyperboles in the mention of Felicities, which make the higheſt Hyperboles but Seeming ones. For theſe Joys, *Lindamor*, of Heaven, are like its Stars, which, by reaſon of our Remoteneſs from them, appear extremely Little, though really in themſelves they are ſo Vaſt, that a leſs than the largeſt is by Odds Greater than the biggeſt

biggeſt Object upon Earth, nay, than the whole Earth it ſelf. And therefore, as if I were to take you with me to contemplate the Planets, I would ſhew you them through ſuch a Teleſcope, as by greatning thoſe bright Objects in compariſon of what to the unaſſiſted Eye they appear, doth ſomewhat leſſen the Diſadvantage of Remoteneſs, and ſhews them with leſs Detraction from their true Magnitude; ſo mentioning to you the Felicities of Heaven, I think it not Unlawful or Improper to endeavour by Repreſentations, tranſcending what they Appear, to give you Notions leſs inferiour to what they Are.

Sect. 21. In Heaven, then, we ſhall taſte Happineſs enough, to enable us to rectifie the Definition of it. We may there be inſtructed how to Name and Rate all Goods by thoſe that will Concentre into the Felicity we ſhall poſſeſs, which ſhall be there made up of the Confluence, Perfection, and Perpetuity of all true Joys. For, Heaven will make us Happy, not (as Philoſophy pretends to do) by the Confinement, but by the Fruition of our Deſires: which ſhall neither Fail in the Choice of their Objects, nor Miſs of the Enjoyment of them; but be, both unerringly

ſingly Juſt, and infallibly Accompliſh'd: In the former of which properties, (as our then Rectifi'd Reaſon will conſider things) we ſhall think our ſelves happier (yet) than in the later. We ſhall there Reſemble the Saints we here Admire, and ſhall not onely See, and be Like thoſe pious Worthies, whoſe virtues Eclipſe theirs, which among the Heathen Deifi'd leſs deſerving Heroes; thoſe excellent Perſons that did as well Ennoble as Inſtruct Mankind, giving us cauſe to Glory, and to Bluſh that we are Men, and whoſe Stories have the unparallel'd Honour of being recorded by Inſpired Pens; Thoſe *Spirits*, I ſay, *of juſt Men made perfect*, as the Scripture tearms them, ſhall be our conſtant and familiar Company, into whoſe bleſſed Society we ſhall not onely be Welcome, but Encreaſe it. In Heaven, we ſhall have a bleſs'd and familiar Converſation with thoſe ſame glorious Spirits, whoſe Nature doth inveſt them with ſuch a Luſtre, that all the Diſadvantage of their Diſguiſes, when they Appear to us, doth ſcarce ſuffice to confine our Raptures to Reſpects below Idolatry, and darken them into Objects for our Wonder, not Adoration. There we ſhall ſee (a Sight worthy Dying for) that Bleſſed Saviour, of whom the Scripture Heb. 12. 23.

does so Much, and so Excellently entertain us, and who having Done and Suffer'd so much for us, does so highly deserve of us, both upon the score of his Infinite Perfections, and upon the account of his Inestimable Benefits. Yes, there shall we see that Holy and Divine Person, who, when he vouchsaf'd (as his Favourite-Disciple speaks) *to pitch his Tent among us*, and dwell with Men on Earth, to fit them by his Merits and Example to dwell with him in Heaven, did so admirably mix an awful Majesty with an humble Meekness, and the assum'd Infirmities of his human Nature, with the seasonable Coruscations of his Divine; and express'd in his whole Life, so Perfect and Exemplary a Virtue, and yet so much Sweetness and Gentleness towards those Aspirers to it, that were the most Short of it; that the Jews themselves could say of him, That *He had done all things well*; and his very Enemies, that were employ'd to apprehend him as a Malefactor, confess'd even to those that sent them to do so, That *never Man spake like him.* And his Apostles, who had most Opportunity to Pry narrowly into his Actions, and were of a Condition and Breeding very unlike to infuse into them Heroick Resolutions, did, in Spight of the frequent Reproofs their failings extorted

Ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν. Joh. 1.14.

Mat. 7.37.

Joh. 7.46.

torted from him, and of the Hardships that attended his Service, think even Death it self in his Company, more Eligible, than Life led out of it; *Let us also go that we may dye with him.* (says even the distrustful *Thomas* to his fellow-Disciples.) But, *Lo damor*, we shall there see the Son of God, not in that *Form of a Servant*, which he put on that he might Suffer for us, and exercise his Priestly and Prophetick Function here below; but in that Regal State and Condition, which belongs to him by virtue of his Kingly Office; on whose score he is styled in the Scripture, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, All power or authority being (as himself speaks) given Him both in Heaven and in Earth. And how Nobly attended may we suppose this Divine Monarch to be in his Exalted Condition in Heaven, when in his state of Humiliation on Earth, whilst he was in the *Wilderness among the wild Beasts, the Angels* are recorded to have *ministred unto him*; and, whilst he lay swath'd in a homely Manger, the multitude of the Cœlestial Host were heard to solemnize his miraculous Birth, according to that passage of the Writer to the *Hebrews*, *When he bringeth in the first begotten into the World*, (he saith) *And let all the Angels of God worship him!* And yet such considerable and noble

Joh. 11. 16.

Phil. 2. 7.

Rev. 19. 16. Mat. 28. 18.

Mat. 1. 13.

Luk. 1.

Heb. 1. 6.

Creatures, those Immaterial Intelligences call'd Angels, are, that One of them in One
2 King. 19. 35. night was able to destroy above a hundred and fourscore thousand Men, in the blasphemous *Sendcherib*'s impious Camp. And so much Majesty, and Superiority, does their Nature give them, in reference even to the Eminentest of Mortals, That, when the undaunted *Joshua* had boldly Challeng'd one of them, that appear'd to him in the likeness of a Man, and demanded, Whom he was for? when he knew him to be an Angel, (unless he suppos'd him to be that promis'd Messiah, who is elsewhere call'd
Mal. 3. 1. *the Angel of the Covenant*, as it is in the Original, and in the same Text *the Lord*) he altars his Address unto him into this
Josh. 5. 13, 14. Submissive one, *What saith my Lord unto his Servant?* And even wise and holy *Daniel* himself, who was the second Person of the World for Power, and the first for much nobler Attributes, Wisdom, and Understanding, who saw so many Governours of vast Provinces, and Professors of admired Magick, inferiour to himself, yet confesses to the Angel, that appear'd to him, That he was confounded and disanimated at his presence, and adds,
Dan. 10. 17. *How can the Servant of this my Lord talk with this my Lord?* We may safely therefore

fore expect, that we ſhall then behold our Saviour, not in thoſe Diſguiſes which diſfigur'd him in their Eyes, that onely conſider'd his Sufferings, but in that triumphant Condition, wherewith they are now Rewarded. The Thorns of his (now no more Galling, but Adorning) Crown will appear upon that radiant Head of his, more glorious, than thoſe of the flaming Buſh, wherein God appeared to *Moſes*. And we ſhall not ſee that Deſpicable form, which made the Prophet ſay, (perſonating the generality of the Jewiſh Nation contemporary with the Meſſias) ---------- *He hath no Form, nor Comelineſs, and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no Beauty that we ſhould deſire.* But we ſhall ſee him encompaſs'd with ſo much Majeſty, and Shining with ſo much of his genuine Splendour and Beauty, that we ſhall deſervedly eſteem him *Nephle, the Admirable.* And our raviſh'd Souls ſhall by the more attentive Contemplation of him, but find more cauſe to imitate the Spouſe in *Solomon's* myſtick *Epithalamium*; who having dwelt upon the Beauty of the ſeveral Parts that concurr'd to the Accompliſhing the Divine Bridegroom, exclaims in an Epiphonema, very contrary to the Expreſſion lately mention'd

Exod. 3. 2.

Iſa. 53. 2.

Iſa. 9. 6.

Cant. 5. 10. in the Prophet, *He is altogether Desires*, or by an Hebraism, *Most desirable*, which our English renders, *He is altogether lovely.* His Eyes will there appear, as St. Rev. 1.14. *John* represents them, of active Fire, and will into the willing Breasts of the Ravish'd beholders, shoot Flames as Pure, as Holy, and as Deathless, as those Fathers of the Church, who believ'd not the Angels altogether Incorporeal, may be suppos'd to have conceiv'd the Seraphims to consist of. Certainly, since (as the Scripture informs us) *It never entred into the Heart of Man, what God has reserv'd in Heaven for those that love him*; That Glory can be but Imperfectly express'd by the bare Epithet of Inconceivable, with which God rewards the meritorious Sufferings and Obedience of that Onely begotten Son of his Love, for whose sake he is pleas'd to confer on so many Thousands of Men, unimaginable Dan. 12.3. Glories. He that vouchsafes ev'n to many of his Servants a Brightness like that of the Stars, will sure communicate a Mal. 4. 2. more radiant Lustre to the *Sun of Righteousness*, that Onely Son of His, *whom* Heb. 1. 2, 3. (to borrow inspir'd Expressions) *he hath made Heir of all things, by whom also he made the Worlds: Who being the brightness*

of

of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himſelf purg'd our Sins, ſate down on the right hand of the Majeſty on high, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not onely in this world, but in that which is to come. Thereby exalting him not onely above all Earthly Princes and Potentates, but even above the Higheſt Orders of the Spirits of the Cœlcitial Hierarchie. Eph. 1. 21.

But apprehend not, *Lindamor*, that this ſublime Exaltation of Chriſt will make him deſpiſe the meaneſt of his Saints, or diſdain Communion with him. For, St. *Paul* aſſures us, That he was in the *form of God*, when he vouchſaf'd to take upon him the form of a Servant, to make us Free; and, ſure, he that condeſcended ſo Far, and ſtoop'd ſo Low, to Invite and Bring us to Heaven, will not refuſe us a gracious Reception there. In the days of his Fleſh he was pleas'd to own *Lazarus*, ev'n in the Diſhonours of the Grave, and vouchſaf'd him in that deſpicable Condition the glorious Title of his Friend. And when he deſcended the Mount of Olives, all the loud Acclamations of *Sect.* 19. Phil. 2. 7.

the glad Multitude, that ſang *Hoſannaes* to him, and ſtrew'd his way with their Palms, their Veſtments, and their Praiſes, could not divert him from Deploring, ev'n with Tears, *Jeruſalem*'s approaching Fate; and expreſſing in the midſt of his Triumphs a Concern, for the very worſt and ſtubbornest of his Enemies. And, leſt it ſhould be thought, that he was thus concern'd for worthleſs Mortals, onely whilſt he Shar'd and Felt the Miſeries of their Condition; give me leave to obſerve to you, *Lindamor*, that immediately after his Reſurrection, whilſt the Senſe of the ſudden and unexampled Change of his Condition was Freſh upon him, and the Remembrance of the Apoſtle's Ingratitude in deſerting him, almoſt as Recent; he ſticks not to give thoſe very Diſciples that forſook him, the glorious Title, (and that a more Familiar one than we find him to have allow'd them on Earth) of *his Brethren*; and particularly ſhews himſelf Sollicitous for that *Peter*, who, in ſpight of all thoſe empty Boaſts, wherewith he not onely ſeem'd to defie Death, but Chriſt's Prediction too, did not onely Forſake his Maſter, but Deni'd him. He can in Heaven be ſo concern'd for his diſtreſſed Members here on Earth, that not onely he can take notice

Luk. 19. 37, 38-41.

Matth. 28. 10.

Mar. 16. 7.

notice of expiring *Stephen*, thorow that cloud of fatal Stones that batter'd down his Prison; and can, when *Saul* was persecuting the vulgar Christians, cry out unto him, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?* as if He, and those that Love him, were but One: But in the Messages he sends to the Angels or Governours of the seven Churches, he sufficiently manifests, That single Christians may be as particularly in his Thoughts, as if they had no other Object: His Greatness will not make his Kindness less Familiar, but only more Obliging; He disdains not, ev'n after his Ascension, to say, *Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any Man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* That King, in the Parable, by whom Himself is represented, is pleas'd himself to welcome each Individual trusty Servant with a peculiar, *Euge bone Serve*; And in another Parable he scruples not to represent the great Condescensions and Familiarity, wherewith the Lord shall remunerate the faithful and watchful Servants, by telling his Disciples, *Blessed are those Servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find so watching. Verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and will make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them.*

Act. 7.

Act. 9. 4.

In the second and third Chapters of the *Apocalyps.*

Rev. 3. 20.

Matth. 25.

Luk. 12. 37.

At

At which Expreſſion, you will the leſs Admire, if you Conſider, that beſides that it is Parabolical, and probably Hyperbolical, and therefore not to be taken (as the French ſpeak, *au pied de la lettre*) in a ſtrict ſence: We find in the Evangelical Story, that our Saviour diſdain'd not to converſe familiarly with Publicans and Sinners, nor even to Waſh the Feet of his own Diſciples: And ſince he condeſcended to ſuch Familiarity to thoſe frail Mortals, ſo many of whom were apt to turn the Favours of God into Wantonneſs, we may the leſs admire his gracious Condeſcenſions to thoſe, the Sinleſneſs of whoſe Condition will keep them from turning his Vouchſafements into any thing, but Occaſions of Joy and Gratitude. Marvel not, *Lindamor*, as at an Impertinency, that I appear ſo Sollicitous to poſſeſs you with high Apprehenſions of the ſuper-eminent Dignity and Felicity of our Exalted Saviour; and, that in the Loftieſt and moſt magnificent Expreſſions, the Scripture affords me, I have endeavour'd to make out to you, that the bright Sun of Righteouſneſs is now grown uncapable of ſuffering Eclipſes, but ſhines with unclouded and unequall'd Splendor; and that we ſhall in Heaven (as the Writer to the *Hebrews* ſpeaks) *ſee Jeſus, who was made a little* (or for a ſhort while

while, βραχύ τι) *lower than the Angels, for* Heb. 2. 9.
the suffering of Death, crown'd with Glory and Honour. For it will make Heaven more Heaven to us, to find Him reigning there, who hath Suffer'd so much for Us; and for whom, if we e'r come thither, we shall have so much Suffer'd. For, since our Love will, as the rest of our surviving Graces, be Perfected, and grow Compleat in Heaven; the ineffable Happiness of our Dear Redeemer, must needs bring an Encrease to ours, commensurate to the Ardency of our Love for him, and we shall relish no Happiness more than That; which is therefore Ours, because He is happy, and Supposes in Him, what it Confers on Us. Besides that, since the Regal Dignity, wherein (as Mediator) he is Instated, may make us owe our Salvation to his Sentence, as well as to his Merits; Heaven it self will be inestimably endear'd to us, by our Injoying it upon his Account. I need not tell you, what a value Lovers are wont to set upon the least Favours that can be bestowed on them by their Mistresses, and that oftentimes a worthless Ribband, a Bracelet of Hair, or some such Trifle, that nothing can make precious but Her presenting it, is highlier valued by the transported Lover, than the richest Presents of Nature, or of Fortune. How great a blessing must it then be,

be, *Lindamor*, to owe Joys, that need not endearing Circumstances to merit the name of Happiness, to a Person so belov'd, that even Heaven it self will bring more felicity to the amorous Soul, as it is a Proof of his Love, than that it is a Donative of his Bounty. As passionate Brides do incomparably more value the Wedding-Rings which their glad Lovers give them, as Pledges, than as Gold. 'Tis said of the persecuted and disgrac'd Apostles, that *they rejoyc'd to have been counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name.* But if they deservedly Rejoyc'd to be allow'd to Suffer for him; of how much Joy shall they have just cause, that are admitted to Reign with him? His having supported the Hardships and the Toyls (for I must not now call them Evils) to which our afflicted Condition of Mortality is Expos'd, does so much Alleviate them, and refresh us under them, that in this sence also it may be truly said, that *the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his hurts we are healed.* But he that Reliev'd us even by his Cross, will sure do More for us by his Crown, when he shall Admit, and even Invite, each faithful Servant to no less a Blessing, than *to enter into his Master's Joy.* So rich a Source of Happiness did Christ Design, to Make himself to us in all his Capacities and Conditions, that in Heaven

Act. 5. 41.

Isa. 53. 5.

Mat. 25. 21.

ven and in Earth, it Was, and Will be, his gracious and constant Imployment, to share our Griefs, or impart to us his Joys; and either Lessen our Miseries by his Sufferings, or Encrease our Happiness by his Felicity.

Expect not, *Lindamor*, that I should Solemnly beg your Pardon for this seeming Excursion, till I come to think it a Digression, to insist on the Blessedness of Christ in Heaven, treating of the Happiness which those that Love him will enjoy there. Wherefore, not to spend time in imploring a needless Forgiveness, I shall proceed to tell you, *Lindamor*, that in Heaven we shall not only see our Elder Brother Christ, but probably also all our Kindred, Friends, and Relations, that Living here in his Fear, Died in his Favour. For, since our Saviour tells us, that *the Children of the Resurrection shall be* ἰσάγγελοι, *equal to*, or like, *the Angels*; who yet in the Visions of *Daniel* and St. *John*, appear to be acquainted with each other: Since, in the Parable of the Miserable Epicure, and the Happy Beggar, the Father of the Faithful is represented, as knowing, not only the Person, and present Condition, but the past Story of *Lazarus*: Since the Instructor of the Gentiles, confidently expects his Converted and Pious *Thessalonians*, to be

Sect. 23.

Luk. 20. 36.

Luk. 16.

his

1 Theſſ. 2. 19, 20. Dan. 2. *his Crown* at *that great Day*; When the *having turned many to Righteouſneſs*, ſhall, as the Scripture foretells, conſer a Star-like and Immortal Brightneſs. Since (which is chiefly conſiderable) the Knowledge of particular Actions, and, conſequently, Perſons, ſeems requiſite to the attainment of that Great End of God, in the Day of Judgment, the Manifeſtation of his Punitive and Remunerative Juſtice: Since, I ſay, theſe Arguments, beſides divers others, are afforded us by the Scripture; we may ſafely conclude it Probable, that we ſhall Know each other, in a Place, where, ſince nothing requiſite to Happineſs can be wanting, we may well ſuppoſe (at leaſt, if we can imagine Here, what we ſhall think There) that we ſhall not want ſo great a Satisfaction, as that of being knowingly Happy, in our Other-ſelves, our Friends. Nor is this only Probable, *Lindamor*, but 'tis not Improbable, that thoſe Friends that Know us in Heaven, ſhall Welcome us thither. For, ſince Chriſt aſſures us, that the very Angels (though they be ſo far from being Related to our Perſons, that they are Foreiners to our very Nature) receive Acceſſion of Joy for a relenting Sinner, that by Repentance Begins to turn towards God; you will not think it Abſurd, that in a Place, where Charity ſhall not only

Luk. 15. 7.

only continue, (as St. *Paul* ſpeaks) but grow perfect, our dear Friends ſhould rejoyce to ſee us, not only Begin to Turn towards God, but Come Home to him. Nor is it unlikely, that our tranſported Souls ſhall mutually Congratulate each other, their having now fully eſcaped the numerous Rocks, and Shelves, and Quick-ſands, and threatning Storms, and no leſs dangerous Calms, through which they are at length arrived at that peaceful Haven, where Innocence and Delight (which are here ſo ſeldom match'd) are inſeparable Companions, both of each other, and each bleſſed Reſident. With thoſe Friends we here Lamented, we ſhall there Rejoyce. And 'twill be but need, that the Diſcovery of each other's Virtues ſhould bring us to a mutual Knowledge of our Perſons; for otherwiſe, we ſhall be ſo Chang'd, that we ſhould never know our Friends; (and ſhould ſcarce know our ſelves, were not an eminent Encreaſe of Knowledge a Part of that happy Change.) For thoſe Departed Friends, whom, at our laſt Separation, we ſaw Disfigured by all the ghaſtly Horrors of Death, we ſhall then ſee aſſiſting about the Majeſtick Throne of Chriſt, with their once *vile Bodies transfigured into the likeneſs of his glorious Body*, mingling their glad Acclamations with the Halleluiahs of

1 Cor. 13. 8.

Phil. 3. 21.

Thrones,

Thrones, Principalities, and Powers, and the most dignifi'd Favourites of the Cœlestial Court. I need not tell you, *Lindamor*, that we shall be more justly Transported at this Meeting, than was good old *Jacob* at that of his Son *Joseph*, whom having long mourn'd for Dead and Lost, he found not only Alive, but a great Favourite, ready to welcome him to an unknown Court. For, whereas the Patriarch said to his Son, *Now let me Dye, since I have seen thy face*; the seeing of our Friends in Heaven will assure us, that we shall for ever Live with them there. The Re-union of Friends being there as privileg'd from Divorce, as that of Soul and Body, (which scarce will be more strict and satisfactory.) For, here indeed, if our Friends do not allay our Love or Affection by unwelcome Actions, or their contagious Sufferings, we commonly dote on them to a Degree, that, as it were, Reduces God to deprive us Early of them, and Snatch our Idols, and his Rivals, from us. But there, our, on both sides, compleated Graces, will not only Deserve, but Allow a higher Strain of Friendship. The near Contemplation and Fruition of the infinitely transcendent Perfections of the Creator, keeping all our Kindness to the Creatures, not only Subordinate To the Love we owe to God, but Grounded

Gen. 46. 30.

Grounded On it; as Excited Needles, when they ſtick faſteſt to each other, ow their Union to their having both been touched by the Load-ſtone; to which, they have therefore Both of them ſtronger Inclinations, than Either to the Other.

There, probably, we ſhall ſatisfactorily underſtand thoſe Deep and Obſcure Myſteries of Religion, which, the profoundeſt Clerks that love not to Flatter themſelves, acknowledg, they are unable fully to Comprehend; being, after all the Toyl and Induſtry of their anxious Enquiries, reduc'd to ſit down with the Apoſtle's ὦ Βάθος, in Admiration of that Depth, whoſe Bottom they cannot Fathom. There we ſhall Underſtand thoſe obſcure paſſages of (That Divine Book, and uncapable of Flattery) The Scripture, which, notwithſtanding all that Bold Criticks, and Learn'd Expoſitors, have Attempted to illuſtrate it, does ſtill continue, in many Places, Obſcure. There, diſcerning how exquiſitely the ſeveral Parts of Scripture are fitted to the ſeveral Times, Perſons, and Occurrences, wherein their all-foreſeeing Author intended moſt to uſe them; we ſhall diſcern not only a Reconcilableneſs, but a Friendſhip, and perfect Harmony, betwixt thoſe Texts, that here ſeem moſt at Variance, and ſhall diſcover not only the *Sect.* 24. Rom. 11. 33.

Sense of the Obscurer passages, but the Requisiteness of their having been written so Obscurely. That strange and peculiar, as well as otherwise Cryptical Method and Style of Scripture, which often costs us so much Study to find it Rational, we shall there discover to be Admirable, and worthy of its Omniscient Author. There, I hope, we shall have clearly expounded to us those Ridles of Providence, which have, but too often, Tempted ev'n Good-men, to Question Gods Conduct in the Government of the World; whilst the Calamities and Persecutions of Virtue, and Innocence, seem Approv'd by him, who Accumulates Prosperities on their Criminal Opposers. There, we shall be convinc'd, that all these Seeming Irregularities, which the Heathen thought fit to impute to the giddy Whimsies of a Blind female Deity, are not only Consistent with God's Justice and Goodness, but are Productions of it. And though such a Belief do here, to Intelligent Persons, seem perhaps a greater piece of Self-denial, than to refrain from Wine, or Gold, or Mistresses; yet in Heaven it will appear as Reasonable, as here we find it Difficult. For, as *Bildad* speaks in Job 8. 9. *Job, we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon Earth are but a Shadow.* And the shortness of our Transitory lives, not

not permitting us to Continue long enough Spectators here, to ſee above a Scene or two at moſt of that great Play, Acted by Mankind upon the Stage of the World; 'tis no wonder, we are apt to harbour ſiniſter Thoughts of the Contriver of a Plot, whoſe neither Beginning nor End we are acquainted with. Which yet is little leſs Injurious, than 'twere to Cenſure the lofty Tragœdian *Seneca*, or ſome other matchleſs Artiſt, having peruſed but a Piece of ſome Tragœdy, whereof the Later part never arrived at our view. But, when once God's whole Plot (if I may ſo ſpeak) and Conduct in the Adminiſtration of the World, ſhall come to be Diſclos'd; all thoſe Revolutions and Occurrences of Empires, States, Families, and Particular Perſons, which Men are here ſo prone to Quarrel with, will there appear ſo Juſt, ſo Requiſite, and ſo Seaſonable, that thoſe very things, which Here tempted us to Deny God, ſhall There engage us to Praiſe him; and we ſhall not ſo properly be Satisfy'd with his Providence, as Raviſh'd. But eſpecially, we ſhall be Tranſported with Wonder and Gratitude, when God ſhall vouchſafe to diſcover to his particular Servants, the Reaſons of his Diſpenſations towards them, and make out to them not only the Neceſſity and Juſtice, but ev'n Merci-

fulneſs of thoſe very Afflictions, that were moſt imputed to his Severity, (no Stroke from God's Paternal Hand, either lightning Sooner, or falling Heavier, or ſtaying Longer, than the Occaſion, that Extorted it, exacted) and convince them, that their Hopes were never Diſappointed, but to Secure their Title to Better things than thoſe they hoped for; nor their Inferiour Intereſts prejudic'd, but for the Advantage of their Supreme ones. Yes, all that unwelcom Darkneſs, that here ſurrounded our purblind Underſtandings, will vaniſh at the dawning of that Bright, and (as St. *Peter's* * Expreſſion may be interpreted) Eternal day; wherein, the Reſolution of all thoſe Difficulties, which here Exercis'd (and perhaps Diſtreſs'd) our Faith, ſhall be granted us to Reward it. And I muſt profeſs to you, *Lin amor*, (as Unfaſhionable as ſuch a Profeſſion may ſeem in a Gentleman not yet Two and Twenty) that I find the ſtudy of thoſe excellent Themes, God's Word, and his Providence, ſo Difficult, and yet ſo Pleaſing and Inviting, that could Heaven afford me no greater Bleſſing than a clear Accompt of the abſtruſe Myſteries of Divinity and Providence, I ſhould value the having my Underſtanding Gratifi'd and Enrich'd with Truths of ſo Noble and precious a Nature,

2 Pet. 3. 18.
* ἡμέρα αἰῶνος.

ture, enough to Court Heaven at the rate of renouncing for it all those unmanly Sensualities, and trifling Vanities, for which, inconsiderate Mortals are wont to forfeit the Interest their Saviour so dearly bought them in it.

Nor shall we onely converse with Saints and Angels, but with that infinitely more glorious Deity, that made them, what they are, without at all impoverishing himself. In Heaven, we shall enjoy (its Maker) God, and *see Him as he is*, who (as the Scripture telleth us) shall then be *all in all*: Comprising all the Goods, we value in the Creatures, as Eminently and Fully, as the Sun doth the Light that Twinkleth in the Stars. *Sect.* 25. 1 Joh. 3. 2. 1 Cor. 15. 28.

If one, that was none of the least of the Philosophers, scrupl'd not to tell the Man that ask'd him, What he was born for, that, It was to contemplate the Sun; If our best Naturalists themselves, though the Darkness that is here cast upon Things, and the Dimness of our Intellectual Eyes, (which I remember *Aristotle* fitly compares to those of an Owl at Noon-day) permit us to discern but very little of that Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, which he has express'd in the Creation; are yet often transported and ravish'd with a just Admiration *Anaxagoras.*

of the Perfections He has displayed in his Workmanship. If the wise Queen that came so far to visit *Solomon*, was put almost into an Extasie, by the sight of his (though Wise, yet Humane) Ordering of things; And if the *Angels themselves* (as St. *Peter* informs us) *desire to look into the mysterious contrivances of God*, in order to Man's Redemption: How great a Satisfaction, *Lindamor*, may we justly conceive it must needs be, to be admitted to See so much of God, as Heaven will Discover to us? Especially, since so much of our future Happiness will consist in that Beatick Vision, (as the School-men justly call it) that St. *John* concluded, that *we shall be like God*, because we *shall see Him as He is*. And our Saviour himself paraphrases our Cœlestial felicity by this blessed Vision, where he says, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*: As on the other side, the Writer to the *Hebrews* employs the being Deni'd the sight of that divine Object, as a Description of extreme Wretchedness, in that Text, where, having exhorted those to whom he writes, to *follow peace and holiness*; he adds, as the formidablest Menace which he could make use of, to Deter them from slighting his Exhortation, *without which, no Man shall see the Lord*. And by this Vision our Saviour

1 Pet. 1. 12.

1 Joh. 3. 2.

Mat. 5. 8.

Heb. 12. 14.

seems

seems to describe the happiness even of Angels; where, forbidding the Scandalizing of any of those little ones that believe in him, he adds, to enforce what he had said, that *their Angels do always see the face of his Father in Heaven.* Mat. 18. 10. We shall be so taken up with the Contemplation and Fruition of that Glorious Object, (in whose Infinity all goods are Included and Dilated) that Ages, numberless as the Joys That Beatifick Vision abounds with, will scarce afford us leisure for a Diversion to any other Pleasures, than those it self creates. Which are so Numerous, and so Entire, that we shall there Desire nothing that we Have not, except more Tongues to sing more Praises to him, or at least a Capacity to pay him greater Thanks for what we Have. And even those Desires, God's gracious Acceptation will make, in being Conceiv'd, Accomplish'd: for, otherwise Heaven's Residents scarce know any other Want, than that of Need to Wish; The Compleat Blessedness of their Condition, reducing them to a happy Uselessness of Wishes, by affording them a full Præ-possession of all the Objects of Desire. There Time, like Fire, having destroy'd What ever it could prey on, shall at last Dye it self, and shall Go Out into Eternity. Whose Nature is

such, that though our Joys, after some Centuries of Years, may seem to have grown Elder, by having been enjoyed so many Ages, yet will they really still continue New, not onely upon the scores of their Welcomeness and Freshness, but by their perpetually Equal (because Infinite) Distance from a Period. There, our Felicity shall always be the Same, yet ever New. Wearineſs arguing Imperfection, either in the Object, or the Appetite; the Former of which is Impossible in God, and the Later shall cease in Heaven. Where our Felicity shall be so great, that Variety (it self) shall not be needed as a Part of it. And, if Heaven do admit Variety, it may be supposed such a one, as shall consist in a Further Knowledg of the First Object (God,) not a Forsaking of it; and such as arises from the fix'd Beholding of the changing-necks of Doves, or such as we may see in the diversifi'd Refractions of the same sparkling Diamond. In God, there is (if I may so speak) such a various Identity, that the Fruition of him both Satisfies and Creates Desires: though That, without Satiety; and This, without Disquiet. Other Delights, like the usual Cloaths we wear, quickly grow Stale, and are soon worn out; whereas Cœlestial Plea-

Pleaſures participate the Prerogative of the Jews Garments in the Wilderneſs, of not Impairing by being uſed Long. But as the amorous Needle, once joyn'd unto the Load-ſtone, would never, uncompell'd, forſake the inchanting Mineral; but, after Ages, cling no leſs cloſely to it than at the firſt Moment of their Union: So do the Saints in Heaven, with the ſame Undiminiſh'd freſhneſs, ever poſſeſs their Joys, as if each moment were the Firſt that they poſſeſs'd them in. And, if their Happineſs do not improve by laſtinger Enjoyment, 'tis perhaps, but becauſe it was at firſt uncapable of Increaſe. Or, if our Pleaſures do admit Acceſſion, they ſhall receive it from our Aſſurance, that we ſhall taſte them for Ever, and perpetually repeat (or rather continue) the ſame renew'd Fruitions To an Eternity, endear'd by nothing more, than by the quiet Leiſure it will afford us, undiſtractedly to Employ it, in Celebrating of the Author's Praiſes; and In a Condition, happier in that by it we grow paſt Doing, than paſt Suffering, Ill. In Heaven, (in a word) our inexhauſted Joys will be ſo Numberleſs, and ſo Immenſe, that we ſhall Need (as well as Have) Eternity it ſelf to taſte them fully. Deut. 29. 5

But, *Lindamor*, it was not my Deſign to give *Sect.* 26.

give you a particular Topography of this Cœleſtial *Canaan*; but only in a few words to let you ſee, that *'tis a Land flowing with Milk and Honey.* And though I acknowledge, I have given you but dark Deſcriptions (and ſometimes rather Poetical than Chorographical) of what the Apoſtle ſtyles,

Col. 1. 12. *The Inheritance of the Saints in Light:* yet ſince, to whet our Longings, for Fruitive (or Experimental) Knowledge, it is reſerv'd among the Prerogatives of being in Heaven, to know how happy we ſhall be, when There: And ſince, what the Scripture hath reveal'd of Paradiſe, ſeems meant rather to Quicken our Obedience, than Satisfie our Curioſity; I may for thoſe purpoſes, have perhaps tolerably perform'd that task (of Heavenly Topography) by the Acknowledgments of my Diſability to do it Worthily. I ſhall now onely add this Property of our expected Bliſs, that the vaſt Multitude of Partners does detract nothing from each private Share, nor does the Publickneſs Of it leſſen Propriety In it. This Ocean of Felicity being ſo Shoarleſs, and ſo Bottomleſs, that all the Saints and Angels cannot exhauſt it, it being as impoſſible for any Aggregate of Finites, to comprehend or exhauſt one Infinite, as 'tis for the greateſt number of Mathematick Points

Points to amount to, or constitute, a Body. Our Neighbour-Regions do all Enjoy the benefit of Light as well as We; yet we enjoy not Less, than if they enjoy'd None. Indeed, there is this difference between the Sun of Righteousness, and that of Heaven; that, whereas the Later, by his presence, Eclipses all the Planets, (his Attendants;) the Former, though radiant with a much mightier Splendor, will, by his Presence, Impart it to his Saints: according to that of the Apostle; *When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in Glory.* Col. 3. 4. So that the Elect, in relation to this Sun, shall not be like Stars, which his shining Obscures and makes to disappear; but like polish'd Silver, or well-glaz'd Arms, or those vaster Balls of burnish'd Brass, the tops of Churches are sometimes adorn'd with, which shine not till they be shin'd upon, and derive their glittering Brightness, and all the dazling Fire that environs and illustrates them, from their being expos'd (unskreen'd) to the Sun's refulgent Beams. *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine,* says every Saint (with the Spouse in the *Canticles*) to his Redeemer. Cant. 6. 3. *David* says of them that put their trust in God, *That he shall abundantly satisfie them with the fatness of his House, and make them* Psal. 38. 6.

drink

drink of the River of his Pleaſures: As if he meant to inſinuate, that, As when a multitude of Perſons drink of the ſame River, none of them is able to Exhauſt it, and yet each of them may have the full liberty of Drinking as much as he Can, or as much as he Could, though none but Himſelf ſhould be Allow'd to Drink of it: So, whoſoever enjoys God, enjoys him Wholly, or at leaſt doth enjoy him ſo Entirely, in Relation to that Man's Capacity, that the Fruition of whatſoever reſts unenjoy'd of God, is forbidden by the Immenſity of the Object, and not the Præ-poſſeſſion of his Rivals. The Angels, though of a Nature Differing from ours, and thereby plac'd above the perſonal Experience of our ſufferings, and infirmities, do yet ſo ſympathize with us, that (as our Luk. 15.7. Saviour informs us) they rejoyce at the repentance of a ſinner. And, though the Members of the Church-Militant, and thoſe of the Triumphant, live as far aſunder, as Heaven is from Earth, and are not more Diſtant as to Place, than Differing as to Condition; yet St. *Paul* reckons all the Saints to be but Eph. 3.15. *one Family in Heaven and Earth.* If then the diſparity of Reſidences, of Qualities, and of Conditions, cannot Now hinder the Lovers of God from being ſo concern'd in one another; how much of endearing Kindneſs may we

we ſuppoſe, that they will Enterchange, When both their Love ſhall be Perfected, and all thoſe other Graces too that are proper to Cheriſh & Encreaſe it. For, the ſame Apoſtle, who, to aſſiſt us, to conceive the Strictneſs of the Union both betwixt Chriſt and his Saints, and the Saints among themſelves, tells us, that *He is the Head*, and *they are his Body, & Members in particular*; teaches us to make this Inference, That (to expreſs his Doctrine in his own Words) *If one Member ſuffer, all the Members ſuffer with it; and if one Member be honour'd, all the Members rejoyce with it.* Yes, *Lindamor*, in that bleſs'd Condition, our Wills being perfectly conform'd unto our Maker's, no Saint nor Angel can enjoy his Love without poſſeſſing a proportionate Degree of Ours. And then, ſince perfect Friendſhip appropriates to each Friend the Croſſes and Proſperities of the other, (as good *Barzillai* could not be higher obliged by *David*, than by the King's kindneſs to his Son) each ſeveral Beatitude in Heaven ſhall (in ſome ſort concern the whole Society, and) be Ours. As Aſtronomers teach us, that the Earth receives Addition of Light by the Sun's Beams beſtow'd upon the Stars, and from the Moon reflecting upon Her. And becauſe our Perſonal Capacities are too too Narrow, to contain

1 Cor. 12. v. 27, 28.

2 Sam. 19. 37.

All

All that Joy, we are (by the ſtrange Arithmetick of Friendſhip) in a manner multipli'd into as many Happy Perſons, as there are Saints and Angels bleſs'd in Heaven. Our perfect Union to our Common Head, and mutual Communion with Each other, applying and bringing home every Felicity of Theirs to Us. This Friendly and Reciprocal Sympathy, reaching us each Glorifi'd Saints Bleſſedneſs, and Him ours, by a bleſs'd Circulation, which makes us Encreaſe, by our Reſenting them, thoſe Joys (of others) whoſe Encreaſe we Reſent. But my Thoughts are engaged in ſo good Company, *Lindamor*, that they keep me from conſidering, how faſt the Hours paſs, and have almoſt made me forget, that the Time which my Occaſions allow'd me for Scribling to you, is ſo far ſpent, that not now at laſt to Reprieve you from the Perſecution of my blunt Pen, were to be almoſt as Injurious to my own Affairs, as to your Patience. Hereafter yet, I may poſſibly make you ſome amends for this, with Riper Diſcourſes of the Nature and Duties, or (if you will) the Properties and Returns of this Love, to which I have hitherto preſented you Some Motives. To (the laſt of) which I might add, That, our Love to the Creature is an Earneſt, but to God 'tis a Title; the One makes

makes Us the Object's, but the Other makes the Object Ours: That, since there is in Love so strange a Magick, as to Transform the Lover into the Object Lov'd; we ought to be extremely careful of the Dedication of a Passion, which, as it is plac'd, must either Dignifie our Nature, or Degrade it: And not to Address to any Lower (or, which is all one, to any Other) Object, the Highest Intensity of a Love, which cannot Stoop without our Degradation. And these I might expatiate on, and Recruit them with many other Motives, additional to those I have already insisted on; but that I may more properly reserve them to the Treatise of the Properties of that Love, whose Nature so partakes That of its Object, that there can hardly be produc'd more powerful Motives to it than the Conditions of it. Since then (as I freshly intimated) I cannot but fear that your tir d Patience, as well as my urgent Occasions (though these will recall me to morrow Morning to my own *Western* Hermitage) doth at present summon me to leave you; and since I cannot do so in a happier place than Heaven, I shall suspend my Farewells, onely to beg you to believe, that so Noble a Motive of Exalting Friendship, as the Ambition of rendring Mine a fit Return for

for Yours, hath so improv'd my Kindness, that my Affection, without wronging its Greatness, could not Express it self by any Less Attempt, than this of gaining you the Greatest, and the most Desirable of all Goods, by elevating (that Noble Harbinger of your Soul) your Love, to Heaven: Whose Joys alone are not Inferiour to those which the Being made Instrumental to procure them you, would really Create in,

My dearest Lindamor,

Your most Faithful, most Affectionate, and most Humble Servant,

ROBERT BOYLE.

From *Leese* this 6th. of *Aug.* 1648.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Whilſt this fourth Edition of the fore-going Treatiſe was upon finiſhing, it hapned, that a Devout and very Ingenious Friend of the Authors, having preſs'd to have the Peruſal of ſome Occaſional Meditations *that lay by him, on ſeveral Subjects, met, among others, with that which follows; And finding the Subject to be of Affinity with what is rather Touch'd than Inſiſted on, in the 65th. page of the paſt Treatiſe,* Touching Men's Inability to Praiſe God Worthily, *and having a great deal of Partiality for the Reflection, would needs have it annex'd as it was, to the newly finiſh'd Edition: Notwithſtanding*

ſtanding the Author's having too juſt cauſe to urge, That, beſides the Imperfections that are made neceſſary by the Sublimity of the Theme, ſuch Occaſional Papers, eſpecially His, are wont to have peculiar Unaccurateneſſes, as being deſign'd rather to entertain the Writer himſelf, than any other Reader.

An

An Occaſional Reflection upon a

LETTER,

(Receiv'd in *April*, 1662.)

Containing an Account of what paſſed on the KING's Coronation-day, in a little Country Town.

I *Need* not, *Pyrocles*, after what we have been reading, tell you, that the Writer of this Letter thinks, that both in what he has ſaid of the King, and in what he has done to Solemnize His Coronation, he has behav'd himſelf rarely well. For I doubt not, but you eaſily diſcern by his Way of writing, that he is highly ſatisfied with his Performances, and expects that he ſhall, if

not be Thanked by the King, at leaſt be Mention'd in the News-book. But 'twill, I fear, be requiſite to tell you, that this honeſt Man is not alone of his mind; for being his Landlord's Bailiff, he is eſteem'd at that rate by his Neighbours, and look'd upon as a Man very conſiderable in his Pariſh; and is perhaps thought to have a right to Pity moſt of thoſe that do not Admire what he has now been doing. And yet, You and I, who pretend not to be Courtiers, can, in his Rural *Encomiums*, and in his ill-contrived way of Honouring his Prince, eaſily diſcover ſo much that might have been Mended, and ſo much that may be Laugh'd at, that, if the King, according to His wonted Graciouſneſs, vouchſafe this Action his Smiles, it muſt not be in conſideration of the ſuitableneſs of the Performances to the Occaſion, but, *partly* as they proceed from a Hearty, though ill-expreſs'd, Loyalty and Love, and *partly*, as they afford Him a Subject of Merriment. And not onely the nice Criticks, who have ſeen thoſe Magnificent Solemnities, and heard the Eloquent Panegyricks,

negyricks, wherewith the principal Cities and Assemblies in the Nation have thought they did but Part of what they should; and not onely those Assiduous Courtiers, who, by the Honour of a nearer Access have Opportunities (deni'd to others) of discovering those Particularities that may best give a high Veneration for a Great Person and a Great Prince, to those that are qualifi'd to discern and relish such things; not onely these, I say, will have a quite other Opinion of the Rural Praises, and Antique Ceremonies that were so well lik'd a hundred Miles from *London*; but this Country-man himself, if he were admitted to the Court, and bred a while there, would in time see so great a distance betwixt what he Has done, and what a Person better bred Might have done, that he could not remember without Blushes, what he now looks upon with Triumph.

And now I must on this occasion confess to You, *Pyrocles*, that I have (on other Rises) several times been revolving in my Thoughts, what the Angels think of those Praises

and Deſcriptions of God that Men deviſe, (For I intend not here to ſpeak of thoſe the Scripture ſuggeſts) and wherein we are moſt Applauded by others, and do oftentimes perchance Applaud our ſelves. For thoſe Cœleſtial Courtiers (if I may ſo call them) have ſeveral Advantages to aſſiſt them in the Celebration of our common Maſter, which we poor Mortals want. For Firſt, They are free from thoſe Selfiſh and Inordinate Affections, that too often hinder us, either from Diſcerning the Excellency of divers of God's Attributes and Ways, or from duly Acknowledging it. They have no Sins to keep them from deſcrying the Juſtneſs of what he does; They have no Ingratitude to oppoſe the fuller Reſentments of His Goodneſs; and they are not tempted, not to diſcern and adore His Wiſdom, for fear they ſhould appear Culpable for repining at His Diſpenſations. And indeed, their Longævity allowing them the full Proſpect from end to end, of thoſe intricate tranſactions of Providence, of which, ſhort-

ſhort-liv'd Mortals do commonly ſee but a part; they are queſtionleſs far more ſatisfi'd with the incomparably better Contrivances they diſcern in the Management of human Affairs, than we are with the Conduct or Plots of the moſt skilfully written Plays and Romances. Beſides, Thoſe happy Spirits, of whom the Scripture tells us, that *They ſtand before God*, and that they *continually ſee His face*, have by that Privilege, the bleſs'd Opportunities of diſcovering in the Deity they Contemplate and Serve, many Excellencies, which even They could never but by Experience have form'd any thoughts of; and they ſee in one anothers Solemn Adorations and Praiſes, a way of Honouring the Object of them, ſo much tranſcending the utmoſt of what We here aim at, that their Homages to their Creator may well be ſuppos'd of a far Nobler Kind than ours. And laſtly, When I conſider, how much leſs unworthy Thoughts and Expreſſions touching Things Divine the ſame Perſon may have, when come to his full Maturity of Age and Parts, and Luk. 1. Math. 18.

whilſt he was but a Child in both; and when I conſider, how much more Advantagious Conceptions of the Wiſdom diſplayed in the Univerſe, and particularly in the Contrivance of a Human Body, one that is a true Philoſopher, and a skilful Anatomiſt, may have, in compariſon of a Man illiterate, and unacquainted with Diſſections: When, I ſay, I conſider theſe things, and compare the dim Twi-light of Human Intellects in this Life, with that Clear and Radiant Light, which the Scripture aſcribes to Angels, I cannot but think, that, having to the Privilege of a much Nearer Acceſs than is allow'd Us to contemplate God's Perfections, the Advantage of having incomparably more Illuminated Intellects to apprehend them with, they muſt frame othergueſs Conceptions of the Divine Attributes, and glorifie the Poſſeſſor at an othergueſs Rate, than is allowed to Thoſe, whoſe Underſtandings are ſo dim, and whoſe Reſidence is ſo remote from that bleſs'd Place, where the Perfections they would Extol are moſt Diſplay'd.

Aſſiſted

Assisted by these and the like Advantages, *Pyrocles*, those happy Spirits may well frame Notions, and employ Expressions in honour of their Maker, so far transcending Ours, that, though the Angel's Goodness keeps them, doubtless, from beholding them with Contempt; yet, we may well think, they look upon them with such a kind of Pity, as that, wherewith great Wits and Courtiers look upon the Mistakes and Imperfections of what they Did and Writ, when they were but Schoolboys; and as that, wherewith, when we shall be admitted to the Society of the Angels, we shall look back upon our former selves. No, *Pyrocles*, to Praise God is a Debt, which, though we should ever be Paying, we must always Owe, not onely because the renewed Obligations will last as long as we; but because, though the entire Sum were *possible* to be paid, *we* have no Coyn of the Value that would be requisite to make a Payment of that nature. 'Tis true indeed, that some Men say much More than others upon

upon a Subject, on which none can say Enough, and which, even the Heb. 10. *Spirits of just Men made perfect* can but imperfectly celebrate. It may be too, that the Praises we pay to God procure Us some from Men, and perhaps even from Orators and Encomiasts; and though I hope no Man can so far flatter himself, as to think he can Flatter what he can never do Right to; yet, the Zealousness of our Endeavours, and the Applause that others entertain them with, may perhaps tempt us to think, that, because in our Expressions we have Surpass'd our Selves, we have almost Equall'd our Theme: as if to make our Praises too great for any other Subject, were sufficient to make them great enough for God. But alas, how widely must we be mistaken! since our Expressions, if we speak sence, can at best but fully represent our Conceptions, and those being but the Notions of a Finite Creature, must needs fall extremely short of Perfections, which were not what they are, if they were not Infinite. No, *when* we have employ'd

ploy'd the loftieſt Hyperboles, and exhauſted all the celebrating Topicks and Figures of Rhetorick; *when* we have dreſs'd Metaphyſical Abſtractions in Poetick Raptures; *when* we have ranſack'd what ever things are moſt Excellent among the Creatures, and having Defæcated them, and Pil'd them up together, have made that Heap but a Riſe to take our ſoaring flight from; *when* we have ſumm'd up, and left Beneath our Expreſſions, all that we are here wont to acknowledge Above them; nay, *when* Inſtructed, as well as Inflam'd, and Tranſported by that *Inacceſſible Light*, that is *Inhabited* by what we Adore, we ſeem Rais'd and Elevated above all that is Mortal, and above our ſelves, and ſay things, that nothing elſe could either Inſpire or Merit; even *then*, I ſay, thoſe Expreſſions, which any otherwiſe appli'd would be Hyperboles, do but expreſs our Devotion, not the Divine Object of it, and declare How much we honour Him, rather than What He is. And indeed, none but the Poſſeſſor of an Infinite

1 Tim. 6. 16.

Infinite Intellect can be able to ſay, what the Poſſeſſor of other Infinite Perfections deſerves to have ſaid of Him. And what ever zealous skill we Praiſe God with, we do far leſs Honour Him than Injure Him, if we think our aſpiringeſt Praiſes can arrive ſo far, as, I ſay not to *Reach*, but ſo much as to *Approach* their Subject.

But let not this inevitable Impotence (*Pyrocles*) Trouble, or Diſcourage Us. Thoſe bleſſed Souls, Rev. 14.4. that *follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes*, do (as we are taught in the Apocalypſe) make it their Buſineſs, and find it their Happineſs, to ſpend a great part of their Eternity in Extolling Him, by whom they are plac'd in a Condition, where they can have no Employment, but what is Holy and Noble. And even here below, the Praiſing of God is a work, wherein we Imitate, though we do not Equal, the Angels, and are buſied in the ſame Employment, though not with the ſame Skill. Nay, Heaven it ſelf exempts not its Reſidents from an Impotence which belongs

to

to Creatures, not as they are Imperfect ones, but as they are Creatures. Even the Members of the Church Triumphant do not Triumph over this neceſſary Impotence; their Praiſes may need Pardon, even in a Place where they can Sin no more: And they can expect but from God's Goodneſs, the Acceptance of thoſe Praiſes, that are Improv'd, as well as Occaſion'd, even by their being made Partakers of his Glory. Nay, even in the Prophet *Iſaiah*'s *Exſtatick Viſion*, Eſa. 6. 2. the Seraphims themſelves, that are introduced, as anſwering one another's glad Acclamations to God, are likewiſe repreſented, as Covering (out of reſpect) their Faces with their Wings. But, *Pyrocles*, as I was ſaying, this unavoidable Diſability, to ſay things Worthy of God, need not at all trouble us; *ſince* we pay our Homages to one, whoſe Goodneſs our expreſſions can as little equal, as they can his other Attributes. He that Created us, will not Impute it to us, that we act but as Creatures; And *ſince* he has declar'd, that *where there is a willing Mind, a Man is accepted* 2 Cor. 8. 12.

cepted according to what he has, and not according to what he has not; The Impotence I have been ſpeaking of, ought to bring us rather Joy than Trouble, ſince the infinite Diſtance betwixt us, without leſſening his favourable Acceptance of our Praiſes, ſuppoſes the boundleſs Perfections of Him, whom thoſe Praiſes (through his Goodneſs) help to give us an Intereſt in; And no Son would repine at His Royal Father's Greatneſs, how Immenſe ſoever, being ſure, that Greatneſs would not leſſen his Kindneſs. For 'tis leſs Deſirable to be able to deſcribe the Power and Excellencies of him we have an Intereſt in, than to have an Intereſt in one, whoſe Power and Goodneſs exceeds what ever we can Say or Fancy of them.

To conclude, *Pyrocles*, *ſince* on the one ſide God is moſt truly ſaid in the Scripture to be ſo *Glorious, that he is Exalted above all Bleſſing and Praiſe*, and conſequently, though *I could* (to uſe St. *Paul*'s phraſe) *ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and Angels*, yet the higheſt things I could ſay of the Divine

Nehem. 9. 5.

1 Cor. 13. 1.

vine Perfections, must needs be therefore far Below them, because a Creature were able to say them. And, since on the other side, it is of Us Men, that God vouchsafes to say, *Whoso offereth Praise, glorifieth Me*; and his transcendent Excellency is so far from being inconsistent with a resembling Graciousness, that such a Benignity is one of the most conspicuous parts of it; I will not forbear to pay my Praises unto one, whose Deserving infinitely more than I can offer, keeps him not from Accepting as much less than he deserves. But then I must not Presume to *fill my mouth with his Praises*, without Sensibly acknowledging, that there is not any Subject, whereon my Expressions can more want Eloquence, than on this Subject; even Eloquence it self would want Expressions. Ps. 50. 23.

FINIS.